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VOLUME LV, NO. 1

THE BOOKMAN

WOMEN AS AUDIENCE

By Mary Austin

AMONG the most resented attitudes to which women have been reduced by our androcentric culture, is that of passive spectator to the male performance. The whole feminist movement, in fact, is energized by our resistance to that rôle, and our determination to participate in constructive movement by contact. It is disconcerting then, to discover, after the removal of the political bar, that in everything but the personal accomplishment we are still in a state of practical nullity toward our national culture, owing to our never having learned, as women, the business of being audience. All that we have learned, it now appears, is the art of sitting still in more or less becoming attitudes.

It is a humiliating admission for so confirmed a feminist as myself to make, but a survey of what is actually transacting among the organized and federated groups of women from whom creative social reaction might have been expected, shows them, in respect to literature, art, and education, very much in the state of those conscientious attendants at concerts who have to wait until the conductor turns around to know when to applaud the orchestra. Any public performer who is clever enough to make the applausive gesture at suitable intervals can be sure of a sufficient feminine claque to keep him circulating in the Big Time of platform attention without any particular deserts.

Consider in this connection, the fate of recent European candidates for the American claque as they have enfilladed across our lecture field. Whenever they have been of sufficient prominence to attract mixed audiences of men and women, those who had nothing to say found themselves swiftly and emphatically curtailed in their opportunities of saying it. Few laurels of alien growth have ever sprouted vigorously enough in the atmosphere of self-conscious democracy, to conceal the want of pertinence in the wearer of them. But when the

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lecturer is of the type whose access to the American pocketbook is chiefly by way of the stereotyped women's organizations, the shadow of a leaf upon his brow—less, the mere poise of that brow as if it wore the wreath—is enough to insure his thrift campaign against frost. After a few months of circulation among women's club audiences he will be in a position to command the top price from the New York magazines for telling the American public the low opinion he has formed of its native culture.

Not that I would deny to, say, W. L. George, such confirmation of his estimate of the inferior intelligence of women as he derives from those who can be brought together to hear him express it. What I am here to affirm is that neither the ease with which American women can be intellectually imposed upon, nor their failure to function creatively as audience to our bourgeoning literature and art, is to be taken as indicative of any lack of capacity critically to appreciate, or individually to produce their share of it. It has to do with the general inexperience of women in collective reaction, and is about as indicative as the movements of a waltzing horse of what could normally be expected.

Let me illustrate from the women's magazines, which are theoretically created in response to what the editors, assisted by the advertisers, really know of what women want. Actually, in addition to their function as trade journals, which they admirably fill, women's magazines represent what the men editors think it desirable for women to read, modified by the erroneous conviction of advertisers that the spread of advanced ideas among women lessens the consumption of bottled mincemeat, colored insert breakfast food, and full-page flour. There was "The Ladies' Home Journal" which, under Mr. Bok, built up an unprecedented standard of magazine popularity. At the same time it failed to retard in the slightest degree the successful development of all the ideas it opposed,—suffrage, women's clubs, family limitation and the like,—which went on progressively among the very women on whose living room tables the "Journal" was periodically displayed.

It is this curious lack of causality between what women unprotestingly take in, and what they can be counted on to do, that inhibits the free expression of woman-mindedness in our literature and art. There is no more sequential relation between what they listen to and what they think, than there is between their morals and the things they can be induced to sit through in the moving picture houses.

The photodrama provides us with one of the most illuminating side lights on the failure of women to function representatively as audience, in their neglect of the quality of "form" in cultural expression. The criterions of women are interior. What was meant, what was subjectively felt by the protagonists, determines for them the affectuality of the action. High ground for this interior standard being established by convention, an audience of women can not only be made to accept, but can be induced to applaud offenses against essential decency. Let it be clearly understood that the boudoir scene is an incident in a proper honeymoon, and details which every man in the audience knows were introduced with libidinous intent, will "get by" with the women. On the same general level this is true of books. In the second rank of popular magazines, one feels certain, we are saved from a great deal of potential indecency only by the cir-

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cumstance of their being read largely by men.

I have lectured many times before women audiences, on the social significance of literature, and I have made a habit of setting down immediately afterward the significant questions asked, with the result that, turning them over just now, I find not one indicative of the desire, or the sense of obligation on the part of the reader, to enter into the creative struggle. What they do seem to want is suggestions for obtaining creative *results* for themselves, or items by which they may participate effectively in the *talk* about created work. Or they will be satisfied with mere entertainment.

Much of this detachment is, I suspect, the residue of woman's century old habit of thinking of books, magazines, plays, and painting as the sort of thing Daddy brings home from his hunting, toward which she has conceived her duty to be an uncritical disposition to make the best of what is offered. Thus there is always a tendency on the part of women to measure art by the ensuing fatness of their personal reactions, rather than by the social significance of the creative act; to be appreciative of the artist as a man rather than as a representative of the tribe of mankind. It may be that the slight touch of the exotic attaching to the foreign poet and novelist, which favors this feminine attitude of superior detachment from the sweat of achieving, has something to do with their preferential hearing. For the rest we have no evidence that Xantippe thought any more highly of the "Dialogues" than Carol Kennicott thought of the symposium at the drug store.

If it were not for the circumstance that few women's clubs can be induced to pay to women artists the terms and attention that are conceded to men, the track to effective participation might be beaten out for them by women who have already trodden it for themselves. No doubt much of the collective ineffectiveness of women in this field is due to their never having acquired free movement of themselves as impersonal, unemphasized items of society.

An incident of constant recurrence in the life of every woman who has attained a reasonable literary expression of herself, is to be importuned by other women to write about this, to protest against that, or to write more often on matters concerning which it is her consuming desire to be permitted to write. When she responds with an impatient, "For heaven's sake, if you like my stuff, don't waste time telling me, tell the editor!" the most usual retort is a startled, "But he wouldn't pay any attention to me, I'm no critic." This is something more than an excessive estimate of the part critics play in the establishment of literary reputations. It is both evidence and result of woman's inexperience in functioning as a particle of the democratic whole. Accustomed immemorially to presenting herself as an individual issue, as maiden, wife, mother, at the lowest as female, she tends still to approach the cultural poll in some specialized capacity. It is news to her that as paying member of the audience she has acquired both privilege and obligation in respect to the quality of the performance. Some day it will come to her, together with the horrid thought that she has been excluded this long time from cultural effectiveness, not by man's wish to exclude her, but because she has never learned the game.

It must be failure of method. Nobody could accuse the women's clubs

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of any failure of intention to do their whole duty by the literature of their native land. Have they not every one of them a book committee, and the habit of inviting visiting celebrities to sit on the platform whole afternoons at the price of saying a few words at the end of the regular program? Has not every author in America had one or more letters stating that the writer's club has assigned that particular author to her for author's day, and she has never read any of his works; will he not kindly send her a review of his life and works to read? Do not thousands of dollars pass annually by way of their lecture committees to the pockets of authors of whom nobody can say with certainty where, in the scheme of American values, they belong?

It would be unfair to attribute the failure of one of the most remarkable organizations ever created in any society, to produce an appreciable effect on our literature, to the four million women of the finer strain who make up its membership. Is not the whole situation a reflection of our common national disposition to regard all art as a performance, some kind of "show"? Whereas the artist himself knows it is a way of life, of which the book or the picture is the evidence rather than the object of pursuit. It is not likely that men, just as men, would do any better. But because women have rather definitely assumed the rôle of patrons of culture, because they have made a stagger at fulfilling it, they must come in for a certain amount of question. It is women who have already accepted the responsibility for social conditions in which mature men and women divide themselves, for purposes of culture, according to sex. So when we wish to talk about organized effort to produce a representative culture, we have nothing else to talk about but the women's clubs.

European observers are disposed to credit this state of things to a want of sex power in our women; that is, to a feebleness in the whole delicate complex of vital responses which women make to men. It is interesting to note that Sinclair Lewis, whether deliberately or by one of those divine accidents to which the sincere artist is liable, related these two impotencies in the heroine of "Main Street". But such an explanation proceeds primarily from the old view that men produce and women appreciate; a state of things which our whole American experiment is organized to deny. The most we can say of American women is that they have rejected the traditional mode of response to intellectual creativeness, without having taught themselves any more efficacious measures.

What women have to learn to be audience to, is not the book after it is written, nor the personality of the author who writes it, but the process by which a really vital book gets itself produced out of our communal experience. What they must assist at is not the adumbration of praise for work that is done, so much as the selection and emphasis of social conditions that have power over a book while it is doing. In this connection an Authors' League as much interested in what of the author is going into the book, as in what is coming back to him in the way of royalties, might be helpful.

It is a realization of the need of women to rehearse the rôle of audience in the collective key, that has led to the organization of the Women's News Service, by which, through the medium of their local press, women will be enabled to practise, along lines

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already familiar, the rapid intake and response indispensable to their success as coefficients of a democratic culture. But the Women's News Service aims only at establishing this rapport about what women are doing. What is needed is a realization that in the indigenous literature of America, there already exists a competent news service about life as it is living. The true approach to it from women is neither as women nor as critics, but as participators in the collective experience, of which the particular mode of poetry or fiction is the individual expression. Such an approach is neither instinctive in women, nor part of their social inheritance. It cannot, however, be assumed that men sitting together as an organized body to hear any available author read from or talk about his work, will produce any sort of result which will be found competent to support a creditable national literature. Critical response must be learned, and to be of constructive value in the great age of American literature, must begin to be operative shortly. Otherwise it might be suspected that the rôle to which men assigned women, of sitting still and saying nothing except what is pleasant, is the one to which they are intrinsically best adapted.

TWO POEMS

By Carl Sandburg

THIS—FOR THE MOON—YES?

THIS is a good book? Yes?
Throw it at the moon.
Stand on the ball of your right foot
And come to the lunge of a centre fielder
Straddling in a throw for the home plate,
Let her go—spang—this book for the moon—yes?
And then—other books, good books, even the best books—shoot 'em with a long twist at the moon —yes?

PRIMER LESSON

LOOK out how you use proud words.
When you let proud words go, it is not easy to call them back.
They wear long boots, hard boots; they walk off proud; they can't hear you calling—
Look out how you use proud words.

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THE QUICKENING SPIRIT

By Elizabeth Bibesco

With Sketches by Frances Delehanty

WHEN we were children our grandmother always appeared to us as a romantic, almost a legendary figure. To have married a Frenchman was in itself such an exciting thing to have done, and then to be called "Madame la Marquise"—what pictures did it not evoke, of powder and patches, gavottes and bowling greens, masks and fans and the fine lost arts of coquetry. And to live in Paris! How wicked, how elegant, how alluring. Grandmama, too, fitted so marvelously into the picture. Her long, tapering fingers covered with rings somehow contrived to make other people's hands look clumsy and naked. There was harmony between the dignity of her carriage and the light grace of her movements, her every gesture crisp and finished and perfect, a little touch of emphasis added by an artist. Her clothes were quite unlike other people's clothes; they seemed, somehow, to have been created on her, to be a part of her essential exquisiteness. They carried with them a flavor of the eternal, of the absolute, belonging, as her tiny feet and her tiny waist belonged, to the age when to be a woman was a vocation, when femininity was an art, when each eyelash had a purpose and usefulness was unknown.

"Que voulez-vous, ma chère?" she would say, with a little shrug. "I was taught to want to please and I was taught how to please. It is a lesson that cannot be unlearned", and she would smile at my mother who had had one husband and a large number of children, whereas she had had one child, two husbands and, legend said, a legion of lovers.

As I grew older I longed to hear more of her adventures. They were

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conducted with the taste, the discretion, the abandon which her training had perfected her in. The strings she pulled—and there must have been many—were invisible threads; she broke hearts in her dressing room, not on the stage. She was a work of art, a bibelot, a fragile, perfect thing; but true to the traditions of her age, she would fling herself into a rushing current of passion and re-emerge without a curl disarranged, whereas we today will sit on the bank and go home bedraggled from the spray.

"Moral, my dear?" she would say to me. "Perhaps we were less moral but we had tact, we had taste. You are taught how to do things, we were taught how to live."

I always tried to make her tell me about her youth and I remember asking her once if it were true that the great Lord R—— had loved her with the passionate adoration rumor attributed to him.

"Lord R——, my dear? I wish I could remember. About what year would that have been?"

I told her.

"Dear me, I am getting an old woman, I am losing my memory. Perhaps his Christian name might recall something to me. Edward? What a very common name, my dear, very unidentifying, wouldn't you say?"

She was sitting bold upright, her tiny foot poised—rather than resting—on a footstool, her instep as arched and as provocative as it had ever been. Little ruffles of lace were flowing from her sleeves and round her throat like the tiny waves that play round paddling children's ankles. Here and there you caught the gleam of a half hidden diamond, and a black velvet ribbon accentuated the milky whiteness of her neck. White, too, blue-white, was the banked up lightness of her hair which gave a peculiar emphasis to her dark eyebrows and her sparkling black eyes. There was a brightness about her that reminded me of a wonderfully cut diamond, of sun on frost, of a brilliant winter's day. If she was old, it was the oldness of civilization, the oldness of eternity. I thought of my contemporaries, with their loose limbs, and their free, big movements, with their stooping shoulders, their sloppy carriage, their clumsy grace. And when I looked up again I almost expected to see a glass dome over Grandmama. But there she sat, beautifully straight, a little malicious, barely perceptible smile on her lips. I knew that she was thinking of our barbarous new world, where floundering, plunging forces collided at every turn, where women shouted and cut their hair and wore no stays and love was a defiant challenge to the conventions, only incidentally connected with a man.

But while I sat at her feet thinking a little sadly of that lost art of pleasing, she began to talk.

"When you are old, my child," she said, "memory becomes an important thing, a strange force that plays with you and over which you have no control. You ask me if Lord R—— loved me and I have forgotten; I daresay he did—we loved a lot in those days. Instead, I can remember a little footstool of my mother's, it had a pattern of forget-me-nots and pansies on it, in petit point; and I remember the blue garters I wore on my wedding day and a bluebottle that crawled over papa's bald head as we walked up the aisle. As we drove away from the church, your grandfather kissed my hand and said, 'Little ladybird'—I recall that I thought it rather foolish. He was a very fine-looking man, but I hated him. He used to lock me up in my bedroom and I would sit in front of the long

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glass and pretend that I was talking to the most charming man in the world."

"Who was the most charming man in the world, Grandmama?"

"He naturally varied year by year, my dear. But as I look back now at the dim procession of people who must once have been so important to me, I remember here a smile and there a laugh, I see the setting of an eye or the shape of a hand, I hear the sound of a voice or a footstep, and I wonder to whom it belonged."

"But surely", I protested, "some images must be as vivid today as they ever were."

"I remember my butler and my mother-in-law and Bismarck and, of course, other people as well. But there was only one man who mattered at the time, who matters now, who has mattered all these years. There is one man whom I miss every morning when I wake up, every night when I go to bed. Always I wanted him in sorrow and in happiness, in sickness and in health, when I was amused and when I was bored. If something delightful happened to me it was only half delightful because he wasn't there; if I was sad, I was twice as sad because he wasn't with me. He understood everything. There was nothing I couldn't tell him."

She broke off and then began talking to herself, her voice soft, with a queer little break in it.

"Oh, John," she said; "I have needed you so badly all these years."

Grandmama loved me. I was her favorite grandchild. She taught me how to hold myself, how to walk, how to sit down, how to stand up, what to do with my hands and my feet, and I wish that I could have caught from her either her manner or her manners. In return I would try fumblingly to describe the new world, to explain to her the importance of votes and trade unions, mass psychology and new forms of government. She would smile a little. Ministers were there to advise their sovereigns, to make war or peace, to negotiate with other countries and, if there were time, to abolish slavery and emancipate Catholics. Grandmama did not believe in emancipation, but she thought that the whims of the Church of Rome should be humored, her French husband having been a Catholic. As for social work—well! philanthropy was an excellent thing in the country and there were a lot of people who found religion a consolation and a help. Grandmama herself was an unbeliever, but she approved of religion which seemed to her a discreet moral force, accustomed to salons and boudoirs and the ways of the world.

"There are many people, my dear", she explained to me, "who need a priest as badly as they need a solicitor —someone to prepare their case for the High Court. I prefer to conduct my own proceedings", and she laughed. Grandmama had discarded the Fabian Society, the Salvation Army, and eugenics on account of their irrelevance; her wonderful breeding enabled her to overlook ragtime and futurism; but she did remain profoundly curious of, and as profoundly shocked by, our methods of making love. That a young man should dash down to the country more or less uninvited, embrace a hitherto uncourted young woman, and then take "No" for an answer—it was too much! The lack of persistence was as distressing as the lack of preparation. What a jerky, changeable generation, how she hated to see love treated so cavalierly, without art or reverence or passion or mystery. This fickleness, how far removed it was from the burn-

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"I am not going away from you," he had said.

ing infidelities she had known; this free and easy give and take was surely centuries away from the tortured pleadings, the agonized surrenders of her youth.

"Ah, my dear", she said, "look at your friends, they cannot use a fan, or enter a room, or keep a man, or love a man, or ruin a man—they cannot even ruin themselves." She looked contemptuously at my sister who was sitting in a corner discussing with a young engineer the relative merits of six or eight cylinders. And then softly, in the low voice with which she always caressed his name, "Would you be interested to see this world, John? Would you have understood it? You, who always understood everything?"

Who was John? The question obsessed me. I went over in my mind all of the men rumor had accredited to Grandmama. I tried little casual remarks, I tried definite questions, but never did a flicker, voluntary or involuntary, tell me, "That was the man." And yet it must surely be possible to trace someone who had played such a very important part in her life that even now, to the woman of eighty, he was a vivid, immediate presence—not a faint image seen through dim

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mists of memory, but a living want—a need—a gap that had never been filled, a loss that had never been accepted.

She remembered her first husband, the passionate, jealous autocrat whom she had hated, she remembered her second husband, charming, courteous, appreciative, indifferent, so carefully chosen, such an ideal background. She remembered her mother and Queen Victoria and Disraeli, she remembered a daily bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley, immense and fragrant (she had forgotten who sent it). She remembered a lavender silk domino, its hood lined with faint powder blue, in which she had escaped to keep a rendez-vous (she had forgotten whom with). She remembered old scents, old dresses, old times, but somehow that long procession of friends and lovers had become dim with faded colors and blurred outlines and missing features. "John" alone, was complete, flesh and blood among ghosts, a living man moving with cinema figures.

When she was eighty-six, my grandmother died, leaving me her papers. I felt as if some marauding vessel had suddenly come into my possession, with a marvelously rich and varied freight of life. The dim figures I had seen threading a faint way through her memory were now blazing with color, dazzlingly alive. Wicked barons and chivalrous knight errants jostled with weary cynics and tireless wits. The adoration of a poet or the passion of a lover competed with the indiscretion of a statesman or the gallantry of a king. From the chandelier-lit ballroom to the moonlit terrace, she flitted, driving one man mad with a laugh and another with a shrug, opening heaven with a whisper and shutting it with a frown, eyes bright with lightning, lips soft with kisses, gay and defiant, all-conquering and untouched.

And then she met John....It was in the country, a milky April day, a bloom of mist over the world. He had forced through her coquetry to her heart, he had pierced through her brilliance to her mind. They had explored one another with an ever increasing delight, happily, confidently, tentatively. Surrendering absolutely to the encroaching intimacy that was enveloping them, they had crept into the recesses of one another's souls, warming and lighting damp, dark places, gilding the remote peaks of their natures with this budding sunrise of their love. Later in the day, it had burst into crimson and orange, drowning the grey dawn, drenching the world in color. Frightened by the brightness of their joy, they had sat in silence, till with a sudden thump of horror they realized that time was snatching the hours away from them under their eyes and that soon they would be torn apart and thrown by Providence into opposite directions, with everything in the world still to say because everything in the world had already been said. The next day he had left for India. Blinded by her tears and by her smile—a brave, tremulous, hovering smile of which she was not quite mistress—he had kissed her hands.

"I am not going away from you," he had said; "you will be with me always. There is no forgetting, you can't forget life."

She had said "No", and she had stroked his face a little and let her fingers creep under his collar; and he had gathered her into his arms and kissed her hair and her eyes very gent-

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ly and deliberately, as if he were setting a seal on something.

He was killed almost as soon as he landed in India. I don't know if she ever had a letter from him. I never found one, but there were a few lines from a brother officer:

"John told me to let you know if anything happened to him. He said death was the consummation of life and that silence was not so incomplete as speech. He said, 'Tell her life is too short for words and love is too long for life and that there is no ending and no forgetting'."

Poor Grandmama, poor brother officer, how were they to find their way through his metaphysics?

But he was right. There was no forgetting. As the acuteness of her sorrow wore off, she talked of him more and more and always as if she had known him for a great number of years. There were little passages in her diary: "I wish John had been there. He was so fond of lobster", or "It was a pity John couldn't have heard Monsieur Disraeli talking of the Greeks"; and then it would invariably reach the point of "he always said", or "he always thought", and the "always" had grown out of one day in the country where there had been no lobsters and the Greeks had not been mentioned. One milky, April day with a bloom of mist on the world, a day half full of silence and altogether full of love.

What was it he had said to her when he left her? "There is no forgetting—you can't forget life." And she had not forgotten. He had become more than life to her. He had become everyday life. She lived with him in all of the little, trivial, irrelevant, all-important intimacies of a daily companionship. He was with her night and day, on great occasions and in those naked moments when the soul cries out in an unbearable agony of loneliness. He was the great moving force in her life which made freezing or drying up impossible.

If she was vivid and vital at eighty, it was because he had kept her alive. And in a curious unanalyzed way, she knew it. Her training had not taught her to search her soul.

When she died her hospital nurse came to me.

"Are you 'Sally'?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Your grandmother wanted you to give a message for her."

"Yes?"

"She asked me if she were dying and I told her the truth. 'Ask Sally to tell John,' she said; 'tell her she must break it to him very gently, he will be so lonely without me. And ask her to say to him for me that there is no ending and no forgetting.'"

"Thank you," I managed to say.

"I always think it is saddest for those who are left behind," nurse explained briskly. "I remember when I was with the Countess of ...."

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OUT OF MY NEWSPAPER DAYS

By Theodore Dreiser

IV: THE BANDIT

(Dreiser, on behalf of the St. Louis "Republic", and Galvin, a rival reporter on the "Globe-Democrat", interview an ex-railroad employee, who has held up a train singlehanded.)

HOWEVER, even here I was destined for another drubbing, as I shall now proceed to show, illustrating once more how man proposes but fate disposes. Following Galvin forward through the train, we soon discovered the detectives and their prisoner in one of the forward cars. To my surprise, I found the prisoner a most unpromising specimen for so unique a deed: short, broad-shouldered, heavy-limbed, with a squarish, unexpressive, even dull-looking face, blue-grey eyes, dark brown hair, big lumpy, rough hands—just the hands one would expect to find on a railroad or baggage smasher—and a tanned and seamed skin. He had on the cheap nondescript clothes of a laborer: a blue "hickory" shirt, blackish-grey trousers, brownish-maroon coat, and a red bandanna handkerchief tied about his neck in lieu of a collar. On his head was a small round brown hat, pulled down over his eyes after the manner of a cap. He had the still, indifferent expression of a captive bird, and when I came up after Galvin and sat down he scarcely looked at me or at Galvin, or if so with eyes that told nothing. I have often wondered what he was really thinking.

Between him and the car window, to foil any attempt at escape in that direction, and fastened to him by a pair of handcuffs, was the sheriff of the county in which he had been taken, a big, bland, inexperienced creature whose sense of his own importance was plainly enhanced by his task. Facing him was one of the detectives of the road or express company, a short, canny, vulturish-looking person, and opposite them, across the aisle, sat still another "detective". There may have been others besides, but I failed to inquire. I was so incensed at the mere presence of Galvin and his cheap and coarse methods of ingratiating himself into any company, that I could scarcely speak. "What!" I thought. "When the utmost finesse would be required to get the true inwardness of all this, to send a cheap pig like this to thrust himself forward and muddle what might otherwise prove a fine story! Why, if it hadn't been for me and my luck and my money, he wouldn't be here at all. And he is posing as a reporter—the best man of the 'Globe'!"

He had the average detective-politician-gambler's habit of simulating an intense interest and enthusiasm which he did not feel. His face, for instance, would wreathe itself into a cheery smile the while his eyes followed one like those of a basilisk, in an attempt to discover whether his assumed friendship was being accepted at the value he wished.

"Gee, sport", he began familiarly in my presence, patting the burglar on

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the knee and fixing him with that basilisk gaze, "that was a great trick you pulled off. The papers'll be crazy to find out how you did it. My paper, the 'Globe-Democrat', wants a whole page of it. It wants your picture too. Did you really do it all alone? Gee! Well, that's what I call swell work, eh, Cap?" and now he turned his ingratiating leer on the county sheriff and the other detectives. In a moment or two more he was telling the latter what an intimate friend he was of "Billy" Desmond, the chief of detectives of St. Louis, and Mr. So-and-So, the chief of police, as well as various other detectives and policemen.

"The dull stuff!" I thought. "And this is what he considers place in this world! And he wants a whole page for the 'Globe'! He'd do well if he wrote a paragraph alone!"

Still, to my intense chagrin, I could see that he was making headway, not only with the sheriff and the detectives but with the burglar himself. The latter smiled a raw, wry smile and looked at him as if he might possibly understand such a person. Galvin's good clothes, always looking like new, his bright yellow shoes, sparkling rings and pins and gaudy tie, seemed to impress them all. So this was the sort of thing these people liked—and they took him for a real newspaper man from a great newspaper! Indeed the only time that I seemed to obtain the least grip on the situation or to impress myself on the minds of the prisoner and his captors, was when it came to those finer shades of questioning which concerned just why, for what ulterior reasons, the man had attempted this deed alone; and then I noticed that my confrère was all ears and making copious notes. He knew enough to take from others what he could not work out for himself. In regard to the principal or general points, I found that my Irish-Jewish friend was as swift at ferreting out facts as anyone, and as eager to know how and why. And always, to my astonishment and chagrin, the prisoner as well as the detectives paid more attention to him than to me. They turned to him as to a lamp and seemed to be immensely more impressed with him than with me, although the main lines of questioning fell to me. All at once I found him whispering to one or other of the detectives while I was developing some thought, but when I turned up anything new, or asked a question he had not thought of, he was all ears again and back to resume the questioning on his own account. In truth, he irritated me frightfully, and appeared to be intensely happy in doing so. My contemptuous looks and remarks did not disturb him in the least, any more than would water a duck. By now I was so dour and enraged that I could think of but one thing that would really satisfy me, and that was to attack him physically and give him a good beating—although I seriously questioned whether I could do that,—he was so contentious, cynical, and savage.

However the story was finally extracted, and a fine tale it made. It appeared that up to a year or two preceding the holdup the robber had been first a freight brakeman or yard hand on this road, being promoted later to the position of superior switchman and assistant freight handler at some station where there was considerable work of this kind. Previous to this he had been a livery stable helper in the town in which he was eventually taken, and before that a farm hand in that neighborhood. About a year before the crime this road, along with many others, had laid off a large number of men, including

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himself, and reduced the wages of all others by as much as ten per cent. Naturally a great deal of labor discontent ensued, and strikes and riots were the order of the day. A certain number of train robberies, charged and traced to dismissed and dissatisfied ex-employees, now followed. The methods of successful train robbing were so clearly set forth by the newspapers that nearly anyone so inclined could follow them. While employed as a freight handler, Lem Rollins had heard, among other things, of the many money shipments made by the express companies in their express cars, as well as the manner in which they were guarded. The Missouri Pacific, for which he worked, was a very popular route for money shipments, both west and east, bullion and bills being in transit all the while between St. Louis and the east, and Kansas City and the west. And although express messengers even at this time, owing to numerous train robberies which had been occurring lately in the west, were always well armed, still these assaults had not been without success. The death of various firemen, engineers, messengers, conductors, and even passengers who ventured to protest, as well as the fact that much money had recently been stolen and never recovered, had not only encouraged the growth of banditry everywhere but had put an unreasoning fear into most employees of the road as well as its passengers—who had no occasion for risking their lives in defense of the road. Hence few even of the especially picked guards ventured to give these marauders battle. I myself during the short time I had been in St. Louis had helped report three such robberies in its immediate vicinity, in all of which cases the bandits had escaped unharmed.

But the psychology which eventually resulted in this amazing singlehanded attempt and success lay not so much in the fact that Rollins was a discharged and poor railroad hand unable to find any other form of employment, as that, having wandered back in his idleness to his native region, he had fallen in love with a young girl there. Being hard pressed for cash and unable to make her such presents as he desired, he had begun to think seriously of some method of raising money. Presently another ex-railroad hand had appeared on the scene with the proposal to rob a train. His scheme he had rejected as not feasible, since he did not wish to tie himself up in a crime, especially with another. Later, after the man had gone and his own condition had become more pressing, he had begun to think of robbing a train on his own account.

Why alone,—that was the point we were all most anxious to find out,—and with all the odds against him? Neither Galvin nor I could induce him to make this point clear, although, once I raised it, we were both most eager to solve it. Didn't he know that he could not expect to overcome engineer and fireman, baggage man and mail man, to say nothing of the express messenger, the conductor, and the passengers?

Yes, he knew, only he had thought he could do it. Other bandits (as few as three in one case of which he had read) had held up large trains: why not one? Revolver shots fired about a train easily overawed all passengers, as well as the trainmen apparently. It was a life and death job either way, and it would be better for him if he worked it out alone instead of with others. Often, he said, other men "squealed" or they had girls who told

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on them.... I looked at him, intensely interested and moved to admiration by the sheer animal courage of it all, —the "gall", the grit, or what you will, imbedded somewhere in this stocky frame.

And how came he to fix on this particular train? I asked. Well, it was this way: Every Thursday and Friday a limited running west at midnight carried larger shipments of money than on other days. This was due to exchanges between eastern and western banks; but he did not know that. Having decided on one of these trains he proceeded by degrees to secure first a small handbag, from which he had scraped all evidence of the maker's name; then later, from other distant places, so as to avoid all chance of detection, six or seven fused sticks of giant powder such as farmers use to blow up stumps; and still later, two revolvers holding six cartridges each, some cartridges, and cord and cloth out of which he proposed to make bundles of the money if necessary. Placing all this in his bag, he visited a small town nearest the spot which, because of its loneliness, he had fixed on as the ideal place for his crime, and reconnoitering it and its possibilities, he finally arranged all of his plans to a nicety.

Here, as he now told us, just at the outskirts of this hamlet, stood a large water tank at which this express as well as nearly all other trains stopped for water. Beyond it, about five miles, was a wood with a marsh somewhere in its depths, an ideal place to bury his booty quickly. The express was due at this tank at about one in the morning. The nearest town beyond the wood was all of five miles away, a mere hamlet like this one. His plan was to conceal himself near this tank and, when the train stopped, and just before it started again, to slip in between the engine tender and the front baggage car, which was "blind" at both ends. Another arrangement, carefully executed beforehand, was to take his handbag, minus its revolvers and sticks of giant powder, which he proposed to carry, and place it along the track just opposite that point in the wood where he wished the train to stop. From his hiding place between the engine and the baggage car he would keep watch, after the train resumed its journey, until the headlight of the engine revealed this bag lying beside the track. Then he would rise up and compel the engineer to stop the train. So far, so good.

As it turned out, two slight errors, one of forgetfulness and one of eyesight, caused him finally to lose the fruit of his plan. On the night in question, between eight and nine, he arrived on the scene of action and did as he had planned. The bag was put in place, the train boarded. However, on reaching the spot where he felt sure the bag should be, he could not see it. Realizing that he was where he wished to work he rose up, covered the two men in the cab, drove them before him to the rear of the engine, and forced them to uncouple it. Then he conducted them to the express car door, where he presented them with a stick of giant powder and ordered them to blow it open. This they did, the messenger within having first refused so to do. Next they were driven into the car and made to blow open the safe and throw out the packages of bills and coin. During this time, realizing the danger of either trainmen or passengers climbing down from the cars in the rear and coming forward, he had fired a few shots toward the passenger coaches, calling to purely imaginary burglars to keep watch there.

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Furthermore, to throw the fear of death into the minds of both engineer and fireman, he pretended to be calling to imaginary confrères on the other side of the train to "keep watch over there". "Don't kill anybody unless you have to, boys," he declared he had said, or "That'll be all right, Frank. Stay over there. Watch that side. I'll take care of these two." And then he would fire a few more shots.

Once the express car door and safe had been blown open and the money handed out, he had compelled the engineer and fireman to come down, recouple the engine, and pull away. Only after the train had safely disappeared did he venture to gather up the various packages, rolling them up in his coat, since he had lost the bag. With this over his shoulder he had staggered off into the night to conceal his hoard in the swamp before making off for safety.

The error which finally caused his discovery was the loss of the bag, which, after concealing the money, he attempted unsuccessfuly to find. In this bag he had, some time before, placed a small handkerchief containing the initials of his love in one corner. Why he might wish to carry the latter about with him was understandable enough, but why he should have put it in the bag and then apparently have forgotten it, was not clear, even to himself.

From the detectives we now learned that the next day at noon the bag had been found by other detectives and citizens just where he had placed it, and that the handkerchief had given them their first clue. The wood was searched, without success however, save that footprints were discovered in various places and measured. Experts meditating on the crime decided that, owing to the hard times and the laying off and discharging of employees, some of these might have had a hand in it; and so in due time the whereabouts and movements of everyone who had worked for the road were gone into. The result was the discovery that this particular exhelper had returned to his native town and had there been going with a certain girl, whom he was now about to marry. Next, it was found that her initials corresponded to those on the handkerchief. Presto, Mr. Rollins was arrested, a search of his room made, and nearly all of the money recovered. Then, being "caught with the goods", he confessed, and here on this day he was being hurried to St. Louis to be jailed and sentenced, while we harpies of the press and the law were gathered about him to make capital of his error.

The only thing that consoled me, however, as I rode St. Louis-ward and tried to piece together the details of this crime, was that, though I had failed to make it impossible for Galvin to get the story at all, still, when it came to the narration of it, I would unquestionably write a better account. For he would have to tell his story to someone else, while I should be able to write my own, putting in such touches as I chose. Only one detail remained to be arranged for, and that was the matter of a picture. Why neither Wandell nor I, nor the editor of the "Globe", had thought to include an artist on this expedition, was more a fault of the time than anything else. In those days illustrations for news stories were by no means so numerous as they are today, and the peripatetic photographer had not yet been invented. As we neared St. Louis Galvin began to see the import of this very clearly, and presently he began to comment on it, saying he "guessed" we'd have to send to the Four Courts after-

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ward and have a photograph made. Suddenly his eyes filled with shrewd cunning, and he turned to me and said:

"How would it be, old man, if we took him up to the 'Globe' office and let the boys make a picture of him—your friends, Wood and McCord? Then both of us could get one right away. I'd say take him to the 'Republic', only the 'Globe' is so much nearer, and we have that new flashlight machine, you know" (which was true, the "Republic" being very poorly equipped in this respect). He added a friendly aside to the effect that of course this depended on whether the prisoner and the officers in charge were willing.

"Not on your life," I replied suspiciously and resentfully; "not to the 'Globe', anyhow. If you want to bring him down to the 'Republic', all right; we'll have them make pictures and you can have one."

"But why not the 'Globe'?" he went on. "Wood and McCord are your friends more'n they are mine. Think of the difference in the distance. We want to save time, don't we? Here it is nearly six-thirty, and by the time we get down there and have a picture taken and I get back to the office it'll be half-past seven or eight. It's all right for you, I suppose, because you can write faster, but look at me. I'd just as lief go down there as not, but what's the difference? Besides, the 'Globe's' got a much better plant, and you know it. Either Wood or McCord 'll make a fine picture, and when we explain to 'em how it is you'll be sure to get one, the same as us—just the same picture. Ain't that all right?"

"No it's not", I replied truculently, "and I won't do it, that's all. It's all right about Dick and Peter—I know what they'll do for me if the paper will let them, but I know the paper won't let them, and besides, you're not going to be able to claim in the morning that this man was brought to the 'Globe' first. I know you. Don't begin to try to put anything over on me, because I won't stand for it, see? And if these people do it anyhow I'll make a kick at headquarters, that's all."

For a moment he appeared to be quieted by this and to decide to abandon his project, but later he took it up again, seemingly in the most conciliatory spirit in the world. At the same time, and from now on, he kept boring me with his eyes, a thing which I had never known him to do before. He was always too hang-dog in looking at me; but now of a sudden there was something bold and friendly as well as tolerant and cynical in his gaze.

"Aw, come on," he argued. He was amazingly aggressive. "What's the use being small about it? The 'Globe's' nearer. Think what a fine picture it'll make. If you don't we'll have to go clear to the office and send an artist down to the jail. You can't take any good pictures down there tonight."

"Cut it," I replied. "I won't do it, that's all." But even as he talked a strange feeling of uncertainty or confusion began to creep over me. For the first time since knowing him, in spite of all my opposition of this afternoon and before, I found myself not quite hating him but feeling as though he weren't such an utterly bad sort after all. What was so wrong about this "Globe" idea anyhow, I began suddenly to ask myself in the most insane and yet dreamy way imaginable; why wouldn't it be all right to do that? Yet inwardly or downwardly, or somewhere within me, something was telling me that it was all wrong and that I was making a big mistake even to think about it. I felt half asleep or surrounded by clouds of something

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which made everything he said seem all right. Still, I wasn't asleep, and now I didn't believe a word he said, but—

"To the 'Globe', sure," I found myself saying to myself in spite of myself, in a dumb, half numb or sensuously warm way. "That wouldn't be so bad. It's nearer. What's wrong with that? Dick or Peter will make a good picture, and then I can take it along." Only at the same time I was also thinking, "I shouldn't really do that. He'll claim the credit for having brought this man to the 'Globe' office. I'll be making a big mistake. The 'Republic' or nothing. Let him come down to the 'Republic'."

In the meantime we were entering St. Louis and the station. By then, somehow, he had not only convinced the sheriff and the other officers, but the prisoner. They liked him and were willing to do what he said. I could even see the rural love of show and parade gleaming in the eyes of the sheriff and the two detectives. Plainly, the office of the "Globe" was truly the great place in their estimation for such an exhibition. At the same time, as a result of looking at me and the prisoner and the officers, Galvin had knitted a fine mental net from which I seemed unable to escape. Even as I rose with these others to leave the train I cried: "No, I won't come in on this! It's all right if you want to bring him down to the 'Republic', or you can take him to the Four Courts, but I'm not going to let you get away with this. You hear now, don't you?" But then it was too late.

Once outside, Galvin laid hold of my arm in an amazingly genial fashion and hung on it. It spite of me, he seemed to be master of the situation and to realize it. Once more he began to plead, and getting in front of me he seemed to do his best to keep my optical attention. From that point on and from that day to this, I have never been able to explain to myself what it was that did happen. All at once, and much more clearly than before, I seemed to see that his plan in regard to the "Globe" was the best. It would save time, and besides, he kept repeating in an almost singsong way that we would go first to the "Globe" and then to the "Republic". "You come up with me to the 'Globe', and then I'll go down with you to the 'Republic'," he kept saying. "We'll just let Wood or McCord take one picture, and then we'll all go down to your place—see?"

Although I didn't see I went. For the time being, actually nothing seemed important. If he had stayed by me I think he could have prevented my writing any story at all. As it was he was so eager to achieve this splendid triumph of introducing the celebrated bandit into the editorial rooms of the "Globe" first and there having him photographed and introduced to my old chief, that he hailed a carriage. The six of us, crowding into it, were bustled off in a trice to the door of the "Globe". Upon seeing him and the detectives and the bandit hurrying across the sidewalk, I suddenly awoke to the asininity of it all.

"Wait!" I called. "Say, hold on! Cut this! I won't do it! I don't agree to this!" But it was too late. In a moment the prisoner and the rest of them were up the two or three low steps of the main entrance and into the hall, and I was left outside to meditate on the insanity of the thing that I had done.

"Great God!" I suddenly exclaimed to myself. "What have I let that fellow do to me? I've been hypnotized, that's what it is! I've allowed him to take a prisoner whom I had in my

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own hands at one time into the office of our great rival to be photographed! He's put it all over me on this job—and I had him beaten! I had him where I could have shoved him off the train—and now I let him do this to me, and tomorrow there'll be a long editorial in the 'Globe' telling how this fellow was brought there first and photographed, with his picture to prove it! Oh Lord, what shall I do? How am I to get out of this?" I swore and groaned for blocks as I walked toward the "Republic", wondering what I should do.

Distinct as was my failure, it was so easy, even when practically admitting the whole truth, to make it seem as though the police had deliberately worked against the "Republic". I did not even have to do that but merely recited my protests, without admitting or insisting upon hypnotism, which Wandell would not have believed anyhow. On the instant he burst into a great rage against the police department, seeing apparently no fault in anything I had done, and vowing vengeance. They were always doing this; they did it to the "Republic" when he was on the "Globe". Wait—he would get even with them yet! Rushing a photographer to the jail, he had various pictures made, all of which appeared with my story, but to no purpose. The "Globe" had us beaten. Although I had slaved over the text, given it the finest turns I could, still there on the front page of the "Globe" was a large picture of the bandit, seated in the sanctum sanctorum of the great "G.-D.", a portion of the figure, although not the head, of its great chief standing in the background, and over it all, in extra large type, the caption:

"LONE TRAIN ROBBER VISITS OFFICE OF GLOBE TO PAY HIS RESPECTS"

and underneath in italics a full account of how he had willingly and gladly come there.

Was I beaten?

Well, rather!

And did I feel it?

I suffered tortures, not only for days but for weeks and months, absolute tortures. Whenever I thought of Galvin I wanted to kill him. To think, I said to myself, that I had thought of the two trains and then run across the meadow and paid the agent for stopping the train, which permitted Galvin to see the burglar at all,—and then to be "done" in this way! And, what was worse, he was so gaily and cynically conscious of having "done" me. Upon meeting me on the street one day, his lip curled with the old undying hatred and contempt.

"These swell reporters!" he sneered. "These high-priced ink-slingers! Say, who got the best of the train robber story, eh?"

And I replied ——

But never mind what I replied. It wasn't fit to print anyhow, and no publisher would print it.

And as for Galvin, he wouldn't fight me, or anything of that sort. He wasn't that kind. But he could smile leeringly, and that under the circumstances was as good a drubbing as one would care to receive.

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THE LITERARY SPOTLIGHT

VI: F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

With a Caricature by William Gropper

IT has been said by a celebrated person that to meet Scott Fitzgerald is to think of a stupid old woman with whom someone has left a diamond; she is extremely proud of the diamond and shows it to everyone who comes by, and everybody is surprised that such an ignorant old woman should possess so valuable a thing; for in nothing does she appear so stupid as in the remarks she makes about the diamond.

The person who invented this simile did not know Scott Fitzgerald very well and can have seen him only, I think, in particularly uninteresting moods. The reader must not suppose that there is any literal truth in the image. Scott Fitzgerald, as anybody will recognize almost immediately upon meeting him, is not a stupid old woman but a good-looking young man of not undistinguished appearance and ingenuous charm, who far from being stupid is both amusing and clever. But there is, none the less, a symbolic truth in the description quoted above: it is true that Fitzgerald has been left with a jewel which he doesn't know quite what to do with. For he has been given imagination without intellectual control of it; he has been given a desire for beauty without an æsthetic ideal; and he has been given a gift for expression without many ideas to express.

Consider, for example, the novel with which he founded his reputation, "This Side of Paradise". It has almost every fault and deficiency that a novel can possibly have. It is not only highly imitative but it is imitated from a bad model. Fitzgerald, when he wrote it, was drunk with Compton Mackenzie, and the book sounds like an American attempt to rewrite "Sinister Street". Now Mackenzie, despite his extraordinary gift for picturesque and comic invention and the capacity for pretty writing which he says that he learned from Keats, lacks both the intellectual force and the emotional imagination to give body and outline to the material which he secretes in such enormous abundance. With the seeds he took from Keats's garden (one of the best kept gardens in the world) he exfloreated so profusely that he blotted out the path of his own. Michael Fane, the hero of "Sinister Street", was swamped in the forest of description; he was smothered in columbine. From the time he went up to Oxford, his personality disappeared and when last seen (at Belgrade) he was no longer anybody in particular. As a consequence, Amory Blaine, the hero of "This Side of Paradise", had a very poor chance of coherence: he had more emotional life, it is true, than the phantom Michael Fane, who, like most of Mackenzie's creations, had practically none at all; but he was quite as much an uncertain quantity

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F. Scott Fitzgerald

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in a phantasmagoria of incident which had no dominating intention to endow it with unity and force. In short, "This Side of Paradise" is really not *about* anything: intellectually it amounts to little more than a gesture—a gesture of indefinite revolt. For another thing, "This Side of Paradise" is very immaturely imagined: it is always just verging on the ludicrous. And, finally, it is one of the most illiterate books of any merit ever published (a fault which the publisher's wretched proof-reading apparently made no effort to correct). It is not only full of bogus ideas and faked literary references but it is full of English words misused with the most reckless abandon.

I have said that "This Side of Paradise" commits almost every sin that a novel can possibly commit: it is true that it does commit every sin except the unpardonable sin: it does not fail to live. The whole preposterous farrago is animated with life. It is, to be sure, rather a fluttering and mercurial sort of life: its emotions do not move you profoundly; its drama does not make you hold your breath; but its gaiety and color and movement gave it a distinction for a literary criticism long accustomed to heaviness, dinginess, and banality in serious American novels. If one thinks of the sort of dead weight of which Ernest Poole's "The Harbor" is an example, one understands the extravagant enthusiasm with which "This Side of Paradise" was hailed.

For another thing, it was well written—well written, in spite of everything. It is true, as I have said above, that Fitzgerald misuses words; his works are full of malapropisms of the most extraordinary kind: you will find—"Whatever your flare *(sic)* proves to be—religion, architecture, literature", "the Juvenalia of my collected editions", "There were nice things in it (the room)...offsprings of a vicarious (vagarious?), impatient taste acting in stray moments", "a mind like his, lucrative in intelligence, intuition, and lightning decision", etc., etc. It reminds one rather of

> Agib, who could readily, at sight,
> Strum a march upon the loud Theodolite.
> He would diligently play
> On the Zoetrope all day,
> And blow the gay Pantechnicon all night.

It is true that Fitzgerald plays the language entirely by ear. But, for all that, his flute is no mean one. He has an instinct for graceful and vivid prose which some of his more serious fellows might envy.

In regard to the man himself, there are perhaps two things worth knowing for the influence they have had on his work. In the first place, he comes from the middle west—from St. Paul, Minnesota. Fitzgerald is as much of the middle west of large cities and country clubs as Lewis is of the middle west of the prairies and little towns. What we find in him is much what we find in the prosperous strata of these cities: sensitivity and eagerness for life without a sound base of culture and taste; a brilliant structure of hotels and exhilarating social activities built not on the eighteenth century but simply on the prairie. And it seems to me a great pity that he has not written more of the west: it is perhaps the only milieu that he thoroughly understands; when he approaches the east, he brings to it the standards of the wealthy west—the preoccupation with display, the love of magnificence and jazz, the vigorous social atmosphere of amiable flappers and youths comparatively unpoisoned as yet by the snobbery of the east. In "The Beautiful

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and Damned", for example, he moves to some extent in a vacuum; the characters have no convincing connection with the background to which they are assigned; they are not part of the organism of New York as the characters in, say, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" are part of the organism of St. Paul. Surely Fitzgerald should do for Summit Avenue what Lewis has done for Main Street.

But you are not to suppose from all this that Fitzgerald is merely a typical middle westerner, with correct clothes and clear skin, who has been sent east to college. The second thing one should understand is the fact that he is Irish on both sides and that he brings to the writing of fiction some qualities rarely found in America. For, like the Irish, he is romantic, but is also cynical about romance; he is ecstatic and bitter; lyrical and sharp. He is bound to represent himself as a Playboy, yet he mocks incessantly at the Playboy. He is vain, a little malicious, of quick intelligence and wit and with a gift for turning language into something iridescent and magical. In fact, he almost answers the description which a great Irishman has written of the Irish:

> An Irishman's imagination never lets him alone, never convinces him, never satisfies him; but it makes him that he can't face reality nor deal with it nor handle it nor conquer it: he can only sneer at them that do...and imagination's such a torture that you can't bear it without whisky....And all the while there goes on a horrible, senseless, mischievous laughter.

For the rest, he is a rather child-like fellow, very much wrapped up in his dream of himself and his projection of it on paper. For a person of his intellectual nimbleness he is extraordinarily little occupied with the general affairs of the world: like a woman, he is not much given to abstract or impersonal thought. Conversations about politics or criticism have a way of snapping back to Fitzgerald. But he never makes you angry in this way; he does it without pompousness or airs. He is utterly without affectation and takes the curse off his relentless egoism by his readiness to laugh at himself and his boyish uncertainty of his abilities. And he possesses, both personally and in his writings, a quality exceedingly rare among the American writers of the day: he is almost the only one among them who has any light-hearted gaiety. He at least knows how to dance—which few of the rest of them do. Where Mr. Lewis would stew "the Problem of Salesmanship" in acrid and rancorous fumes, Fitzgerald, in "The Beautiful and Damned", has turned it to hilarious farce. His characters—and himself—are actors in an elfin harlequinade; they are as nimble, as gay and as lovely and as hard-hearted as fairies: Columbine elopes with Harlequin on a rope ladder from the Ritz and both go morris-dancing amuck on a case of bootleg liquor; Pantaloon is slain with an epigram that withers him up like a leaf; the Policeman is tripped by Harlequin and falls into the Pulitzer Fountain. In the end, Harlequin puts on false whiskers and pretends he is Bernard Shaw; he gives an elaborate interview to the newspapers on politics, literature, and history; a hundred thousand readers read it and are enormously impressed; Columbine nearly dies laughing; Harlequin buys another case of gin.

Let me quote a characteristic incident in connection with "The Beautiful and Damned", which will give a better idea of Fitzgerald than any number of adjectives could do.

Since writing "This Side of Paradise"—on the inspiration of Wells and Mackenzie—Fitzgerald has become ac-

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quainted with another school of fiction: the ironical-pessimistic. In college, he had supposed that the thing to do was to write biographical novels with a burst of ideas toward the close; since his advent into the literary world, he has discovered that there is another genre in favor: the kind which makes much of the tragedy and "the meaninglessness of life". Hitherto, he had supposed that the thing to do was to discover a meaning in life; but he now set bravely about to produce a distressing tragedy which should be, also, 100 per cent. meaningless. As a result of this determination, the first version of "The Beautiful and Damned" culminated in a carnival of disaster for which the reader was imperfectly prepared: Fitzgerald ruined his characters wholesale with a set of catastrophes so arbitrary that beside them, the worst perversities of Hardy were like the working of natural laws. The heroine loses her beauty at a prematurely early age and her character, though it is hard to see why, incontinently goes with it; Richard Caramel, a writer of promise, loses all his literary ideals and becomes a prostitute to popular taste; and the hero, Anthony Patch, who has formerly been very rich, not only loses all his money but, unable to make a living at anything, succumbs to inertia and drink, and eventually goes mad. But the bitterest moment of the story, at the very end, comes when Anthony is wandering the streets of New York in the attempt to borrow some money. After several humiliating failures, he finally approaches an old friend whom he sees with an elegant lady just getting into a cab. It is Maury Noble, the most brilliant of all his friends, a cynic, an intellectual, and a man of genuine parts. But Maury fails to recognize Anthony; he cuts him dead; and drives away in the taxi. "But", the author explains, "he really had not seen Anthony. For Maury had indulged his appetite for alcoholic beverage once too often: he was now stone-blind!"

But the point of my story is this: though he had written the passage in all seriousness, as soon as he heard other people laughing at it, he began laughing at it himself, and with as much light-hearted gaiety and surprise as if he had just read it in Max Beerbohm. And he began to improvise a burlesque which ran somewhat as follows: "It seemed to Anthony that Maury's eyes had a fixed glassy stare; his legs moved stiffly as he walked and when he spoke his voice had no life in it. When Anthony came nearer, he saw that Maury was dead!"

What will Fitzgerald eventually amount to as a literary figure? It is difficult to tell: for, whatever his intellectual limitations and his lack of artistic ideal, he has a brilliant imagination and it is, therefore, impossible to predict what he will imagine next: it may, for anything we know, be something extraordinarily beautiful. It is unfair to submit him already to a rigorous critical overhauling while he is still so very young and has most of his work before him: he may yet give the lie to all my strictures. For the present, however, his imagination is certainly not seen to good advantage: it suffers badly from lack of discipline and poverty of æsthetic ideas. "The Beautiful and Damned", to be sure, marks an advance over "This Side of Paradise": the style is more nearly mature and the subject more solidly unified and certain scenes in it are probably the most real he has ever done. But, in general, it may be said that he presents just now a spectacle to sadden the critic. What a

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genius for comic dialogue and what indifference to high comedy! What a delightful feeling for nonsense (see "Mr. Icky", in "The Smart Set", for example) and what a strange inability to turn it to any artistic account! What unfailing fecundity of incident and what weakness of central theme! —The spigot is out of order and the wine is running out on the floor! Will the owner not supply some receptacle to preserve it a few generations?

But, in spite of all that I have said, Fitzgerald has his intellectual importance. In his very moral anarchy, in the very confusion of his revolt, he is typical of the generation of after the war—the generation described on the last page of "This Side of Paradise" as "grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in men shaken". There is a profounder truth in "The Beautiful and Damned" than the author perhaps intended to convey: the hero and heroine are strange creatures without purpose or method in life, who give themselves up to wild debaucheries and do not, from beginning to end, perform a single serious act; but you somehow get the impression that, in spite of their idleness and wastage, they are the most rational people in the book: wherever they touch the common life, the institutions of men are made to appear a contemptible farce of the futile and the absurd; the worlds of finance, of the army, and, finally, of business are successively exposed as completely without dignity or meaning. The inference is that, in such a world, the sanest and most dignified thing is to live for the jazz of the moment and forget the activities of men. And it is not altogether internal confusion which has produced the confusion of such a book. It may be that we must not expect too much intellectual balance of young men who write books in the year 1921: we must remember that their environment and their chief source of stimulation have been the wars, the commerce, and the society of the Age of Confusion itself.

SNOW FANTASY

By Daniel Henderson

THE wraiths of buds that formed to fade:
Viburnum's and hydrangea's ghosts,
Spiræa's fantom, lily's shade,
Lilac's and dogwood's spectral hosts,
Return to barren lawns and walks:—
Their bloom across the garden storms!
And now the wistful boughs and stalks
Are clustered with their lovely forms!

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THE ALPINE SCHOOL OF FICTION

By Gertrude Atherton

WE all know that anthropology is the science of man and some of us, that fiction at its best is the study of man. All good novelists and a few short story writers and dramatists are concerned chiefly with the psychology of man, that soul compounded of millions of ancestors and played upon more or less helplessly by the raw and subtle forces of his span.

But while psychology has been of consuming interest to writers of the first rank, anthropology, the greatest of all the sciences, has received little or no consideration. If rulers and statesmen had been able to study anthropology since the beginning of civilization there would be no labor problem today, and if ambitious writers of fiction would give more of their attention to anthropology and less to psychoanalysis they would cease from fumbling, expand their horizon, and make valuable contributions to sociology. The reason that so many novelists brilliant in style, profound and searching in analysis, and sufficiently diverting in action, leave the intelligent reader unsatisfied, is because the writer has trusted to his intuition and observation and is wholly ignorant of the science that would have steered him with fewer stumbles through that maze we call human nature. Human nature is largely a matter of the cephalic index.

There is a vast literature on anthropology, and none but a devotee of the science has time to read it all; but if novelists would give a few months' study (and recurrent study) to the work of Ripley, Osborn, Deniker, Frazer, Tyler, and Madison Grant's "The Passing of the Great Race", they would find a relation between cause and effect that would make their task simpler in the future. It is the last remarkable work, with its warning of tremendous import to civilization, that has tempted me to write this article.

Practically everyone who reads the reviews and more serious magazines knows something of the first European races of which we have discovered any traces, the Neanderthals and the Crô-Magnons. With the Nordics, Mediterraneans, and Alpines, the three ancestral races of Europe from which we ourselves derive, it is quite a different matter. A brief sketch of them is necessary to make this article intelligible; for in spite of the fact that Mr. Grant's book has had an astonishing popularity for a scientific work and has had its beneficent effect upon recent legislation, no serious work, particularly when it costs $3.50, spreads far beyond the intellectual public of any country.

The Mediterraneans came from southern and southwestern Asia, and this race was responsible for the great civilizations of Asia Minor and northern Africa. Its members were long-headed (dolichocephalic), dark, small, and lightly built. They pushed northward through Spain and France until, crossing the land connection, they en-

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tered the British Isles, where they made history as "ancient Britons".

The Alpines seem to have been cradled in the Iranian plateau, where their next of kin, to be known as Mongols and Mongoloids, turned their faces to the east. The relationship is very suspicious, but if the Alpines ever were slant-eyed, they lost this character through Mediterranean or Nordic saturation. The fact remains however that they alone of the three great races of Europe are, like the Mongols and Mongoloids, round-heads or brachycephalic. It is not too far-fetched to call them near-Mongoloids. They were dark, stocky, and powerful, normally peaceful and plebeian. They possessed when they entered Europe a knowledge of agriculture, pottery, and domestication of animals; and about 1800 B. C. they brought in the bronze implements of war—no invention of theirs—which, however, were quickly turned against them by the Nordics. Further than this, and in spite of their numbers, they contributed nothing even to the dawn of civilization. They put an end to the Stone Age and that is the best that can be claimed for them.

The Nordics, originating in the grasslands of Russia, began their slow pilgrimage to the north as the ice caps retreated, entering Scandinavia about twelve thousand years ago. It was not until they learned to substitute bronze for stone that they turned their attention to western Europe. The Nordics were of great stature and vigor (all weaklings bred out by climatic rigors), with fair hair, blue or grey eyes, white skin, and the greatest genius for government and for war the world has ever known. They were—and are—dolichocephalic, in both face and head measurements longer than the Mediterranean race, with fine aquiline or straight noses. Of the three races they alone are European in origin and to them we owe the synthetic Aryan speech.

Armed with their bronze weapons they poured over central and western Europe an irresistible tide. In addition to their great physical strength and genius for warfare they possessed mental qualities of a high order and remained the ruling class in all invaded territories. They form the ruling classes and aristocracies of the white world today, although there is no doubt that many of their subdivisions owe the quicksilver in their brains to early interbreeding with the Mediterraneans. The Hellenes were Nordics, but without the conquest of Greece there would have been no historic Athenian civilization to their credit. The Teutonic-Nordics descended upon degenerate Rome, a horde of northern barbarians, but out of their genius for government, superimposed upon the Latin genius for the arts and graces of life, rose the most splendid civilization of historic times.

Numerically the Nordics are declining, owing not only to their inability to survive in southern climes if forced to do manual labor in the sun, but to their bravery and initiative in war. Modern France is only one-fifth Nordic. The race exists in its greatest purity today in the states or regions on the southern and eastern coasts of the Baltic, in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, North Ireland, Scotland, and England; although the flower of the latter has been sacrificed in so many wars that the long submerged Mediterranean race is forcing its way to the top. The Alpines now occupy the great bulk of France, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Hungary, the Balkans, Jugo-Slovakia, Finland, and Russia. They and the degenerated

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Mediterraneans breed more rapidly than the Nordics, particularly when, owing to diminished stature and other physical defects, they are unfit for military service. So far we are too unenlightened to sterilize such groups and exterminate them.

It may have been inferred by this time that the great mass of immigrants we have taken to our bosom, with the exception of the Irish, are Alpines and degenerated Mediterraneans. Our best material, if we knew how to treat it, is the Nordic from Scandinavia.

This country was originally settled by Nordics: British, Hollanders, and Huguenots. But after the Civil War —with its terrible sacrifice of Nordics —there was a tremendous industrial impetus. The Alpine round-heads and the scum of Mediterranea were imported in vast numbers, joyfully exported by their governments who even emptied the jails; and native American working men, declining to sink to the debased living standards that naturally ensued, ceased to produce large families. The consequence is that the old Nordic-American stock is being rapidly bred out by the refuse of Europe.

The round-heads have proved throughout at least twelve thousand years that nature denied them the creative spark, especially in regard to government. (Remember that Russia is now almost entirely Alpine!) Even when they have been so saturated for centuries with Nordic blood that their race is only to be recognized today by skull measurements, they are always inferior to the pure Nordics; whereas the Nordics, even in the most barbarous stages of their development, conquered the effete Mediterranean civilizations only to pour blood and iron into their veins and raise them to far greater heights than they had ever attained unaided. Nature made certain races to rule and others to be ruled, and the sooner all comprehend this basic fact the better for modern civilization. There is no getting ahead of the cephalic index.

II

What have all these hard facts to do with fiction? Too much, unfortunately. The early literature of this country was aristocratic. It was written by Nordics. (Fancy a round-head writing "The Scarlet Letter"!) It continued to be written by aristocrats for many years. The "people" were by no means ignored, but over them was shed the light of the distinguished mind of the author. Even the minor story tellers, slavishly imitating the lighter novelists of England, their facile talent lacking originality, had a certain grace and distinction.

The great bulk of American fiction today is essentially plebeian. The few exceptions make the fact more startling. The cause is not far to seek. With the enormous influx of European plebeians the poison of democracy began its deadly work. The sun of the *republic* started on its westward course. This heterogeneous mass was given the vote, its children were admitted to the public schools, heretofore sacred to Americans, and the Declaration of Independence was given a free interpretation never intended by its authors.

I am by no means contending that these millions of aliens and their descendants should have been kept in a condition of ignorance and slavery. That would have been sheer brutality, and what is more to the point, would have been demoralizing in its effect upon the superior race. We opened our gates from motives of expediency

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and enterprise, and our exaggerated idealism compelled us to give to immigrants equal rights as citizens. If we had been wiser we would have been more merciful and just in the matter of wage and living conditions, and reserved the citizenship for those who after many years proved themselves capable of using it to the advantage of the country.

And who will blame the newcomers? Downtrodden in their own countries, or at best unable to earn a decent living, they set sail for the promised land full of hope and humbly grateful. But humility and gratitude endured briefly. The spirit of liberty in the new land of infinite resource went to their heads. They wanted the United States of America for their very own. They knew as little of anthropology as the still entrenched Nordics and cared less. They recognized only human rights and the superior right of numbers. As time went on millions rose in the social scale. They intermarried with the Americans of the old stock and the process of breeding-out began. Having gained so much they wanted more, and from their ranks emerged every known variety of agitator, crank, and fake religionist.

The march of democracy in a new country whose major population is of the lowest possible origin, is as inevitable as war between jealous nations. We have only ourselves to thank and must deal with the facts. William Henry Smyth, a distinguished engineer of Berkeley, California, wrote at the close of the war a series of thoughtful papers for the New York magazine "Industrial Management", on the subject of "Technocracy". His thesis was the need of a Supreme National Council of Scientists to advise us how best to live, and how most efficiently to realize our individual aspirations and our national purpose. As we enlisted—in 1917-1918—all those peculiarly adapted to the destructive functions of war, let us now systematically unify all those peculiarly adapted to the constructive functions of peace—our scientists, our technologists, our investors, all indeed who are specially fitted to deal with the social and constructive problems of peaceful industry, nationally unify them and their accomplishments for the commonwealth.

There is no doubt that this political readjustment and its consequent recreation of the old American ideal, would raise the tone of our fiction. It was the pecuniary and political success of these immigrants and their intermarriage with Americans that not only bred the spirit of democracy among themselves but made it the fashion. The tone of the small towns (and this includes the small towns in great cities) steadily declined. The original American in mass may have been uncouth and unlettered but he was not common. Today the great mass of the "American people" who have prospered in a small way—to say nothing of those that have risen higher still—are commoner than anything the world has ever known. They are smug and dull and vulgar, their standard of manners must make a well trained English servant feel himself a superior being. What they call idealism is cheap sentimentalism; reticence is unknown, or resented; those that fain would practise the pride they have read of and servilely admire, merely succeed in being "stuck up", and correspondingly ridiculous. If they encounter natural pride they experience an acute pain in their itching ego. Nor is this the worst. The tone of these groups, in-

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finite in number, is forcing its way upward and altering the tone of society in every stratum it permeates. It threatens to become a sort of social flu which attacks high and low alike. This is the secret of the lowered tone of what was formerly called the best society, unjustly laid to the war. Society like literature is suffering from the democratic flu. In losing its class pride, its aristocratic standard, it has lost its self-respect.

Of course it was inevitable that these conditions should be reflected in fiction; not only because writers inclined to naturalism and deficient in imagination depict the obvious, but because the majority of our present writers were born and bred in small towns. Some no doubt are of the old American stock, with the features and coloring, to say nothing of head measurements, that denote their inheritance from the greatest of the three races. But they are the victims of the lowered standards of their environment, they scoff at the aristocratic standards of their ancestors, they are rampantly democratic because it is the fashion; not realizing that they are slavishly imitating the new democracy of a race that would have been totally incapable of founding the republic whose inestimable benefits its multiplying numbers enjoy and abuse.

I am making no argument for a fiction that shall deal only with people of exalted birth and position. Nothing would be more tiresome. I am only protesting against the deification of the common and vulgar. As an illustration compare the stories of Mary Wilkins, who began her career some thirty-five years ago, with the "small town" fiction of today. Miss Wilkins wrote entirely of village life and humble people, but not only was she gifted with that distinction of mind which would have enabled her to write of a city slum without offense, but the American simplicity of her village types was then untainted by the hideous commonness with which the small town reeks today.

Now, there is probably not a small town in the United States that has not at least a small proportion of Nordics, proud of their descent, well educated, patrons of literature and whatever other arts may come their way, who travel when they can, whose accent is inoffensive, and who abjure the vulgar colloquisms which distinguish the speech of the major population—who, for the most part, were their schoolmates. But these exceptions are ignored in fiction, possibly because they are honestly regarded as non-typical by the disciples of Zola—who, it may be pointed out, has never been admitted to the rank of first-class novelists.

Were it not for Booth Tarkington the world would be forced to the conclusion that there was not an American of the old stock left in the middle west. No one has ever questioned the truth of Tarkington's characters and scene; and yet he gives his people precisely the same setting beloved of the naturalistic school. But he is, I will venture to say, an undiluted—and uncorrupted!—Nordic. He naturally selects real Americans like himself for his mental playmates and, possessing imagination as well as mental distinction, he is an artist, not a reporter. The fiction of the Atlantic states is still to a certain extent under the influence of the Nordic or genuine American tradition. So far, the higher type of eastern novelist at least has not felt the effects of immigration, possibly because the importations are herded in the large cities and segre-

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gated by their poverty. It is the millions that have spread over the middle and north west who are responsible for the blight, and as a fashion, at least, this blight is creeping into California.

The Alpine influence in American letters has never been so signally demonstrated as in the large and increasing number of midwestern novels that have achieved so remarkable a notoriety during the last year and a half. ("Brass", a good piece of work in spite of its detestable characters, may be included in this group, although its scenes are laid in California.) Every character in them all is a round-head, brachycephalic, Alpine. Not a real American could be found among them with a magnifying glass. No one can blame these writers for their fierce intellectual reaction from the sickly sentimentalism of a far more popular school of fiction. They started out with a fine determination to "tell the truth for once", to sterilize American fiction, to do something new. But their pendulum swung too far. In their breathless hunt for the obverse of lollypops they discovered only tadpoles.

Not one of all these novels contains a character or condition worthy of the striking cleverness expended upon it. And they are as un-American in the true sense of the word as the work of those forgotten minor novelists who flourished before the Civil War.

For all I know every one of these writers may be of the best American stock, Nordics (although I have my doubts). But they have been democratized and debased by their round-head environment. Their Nordic mental inheritance, if not their physical attribute, has been "bred out". Nevertheless, there is no disputing their cleverness, which now and then rises to the dignity of talent—never to genius. The trouble is they are not clever enough—unless, to be sure, they ask for nothing but the passing and remunerative vogue—; for they have missed the chance of making lasting contributions to American literature. Possessed of uncommonly sharp vision, they focused it upon telling types to prove a false thesis, instead of permitting it to range over the entire field and discover the wheat in the chaff. Convinced they were writing real American fiction for the first time, they have succeeded in giving us an assortment of creatures derived from inferior Asia. The Nordic is creative. He has immense initiative. Not a character in this entire group of novels has a semblance of the creative spark, an ounce of initiative. One and all are the feeble puppets of circumstance, dull, atrophied, futile in their poor aspirations, miserable victims. Their resemblance to the fatalistic Slav is significant. They would be effective as foils. There is no class so contemptible that it should be ignored by the biographical novelist. But it is too much like a portent of dissolution that worthy and conscientious authors should be afflicted with an intellectual myopia that permits them to be fascinated by the mean and spurious alone, and that the public should welcome their deductions as gospel truth.

Take "Zell", for instance. The hero and his sister possessed both intelligence and ambition and were wholly dissatisfied with their material restrictions; capable, as the author portrayed them in the earlier chapters, of making an honorable success of their lives—if only! But their attempts to escape were feeble and tentative. Initiative, the hall mark of the race to which they presumably belonged, was

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entirely lacking, although to the young, healthy, and intelligent of the old stock, all things are possible. They were dismal failures. Although bred in a climate favorable to Nordics they acted like southern "crackers". If the author had known anything of anthropology he would have uprooted and sent them forth into the great world in search of fortune. Moreover, one purpose of fiction is to show the way, not merely to report.

It is quite natural that pessimism should play a great part in the reaction of eager young writers from the sentimental optimism with which our literature has been cursed. Life is no picnic. Everybody is forced to suffer, and the intelligent soon part with their illusions. But if they are intelligent enough they regain their sense of proportion, cultivate philosophy, and with it clarity of vision. The trouble with most of the younger group of writers is that they are still in their initial stage of intelligence. Whether they ever develop depends somewhat upon whether they possess, however submerged at present, a sense of humor; for without humor there is no sense of proportion.

Sinclair Lewis missed a great opportunity. If he had read, with the intelligence that is his, "The Passing of the Great Race" (published first in 1916), he would have made a notable contribution to American letters, not a passing sensation. Instead of confining his attention and his formidable industry to brachycephali, he would have gone into training for mastership in fiction by portraying the struggle of the Nordic to survive the Alpine inundation. He has been taken to task for portraying only the "bad" and ignoring the "good" in his "typical" little community. But that is far from the point. The Nordics are no angels. When nature so richly endowed them she omitted perfection from their make-up. They have made the great dramas of history and in them they have played the great dramatic rôles, but they have shown all the ruthlessness of their mighty gifts and a considerable number of weaknesses to boot. Nevertheless, those that are periodically invigorated by the rigors of a northern winter will continue, unless exterminated, to prove their preeminence of race (heredity) over environment, no matter how choked that environment may be with round-heads; preserve their adventurous and dominating spirit, cultivate their minds, and, in this country, not yield an iota of their Americanism. The more pessimistic the author the more careful he should be to recognize the Nordic element in his scene, however his perturbed spirit may crowd it with Alpines. Then, whatever his pessimism, inevitably the Nordics would force his hand; even if he revenged himself by making villains of them. To raise round-heads—forever doomed by nature to inferiority—to the dignity of predominance, shows not only a total lack of values and a blindness of one eye but some weakness in the author's own Americanism.

Madison Grant points out that all the adventurous spirits of this country have been Nordics. It was Nordics, however humble of circumstance, who deserted their sterile farms and opened up the great west. "In the Northwest and in Alaska in the days of the gold rush it was in the mining-camps a matter of comment if a man turned up with dark eyes, so universal were blue and gray eyes among the pioneers." The same was true of the California Forty-niners and of the thousands of emigrants who followed them to improve their fortunes.

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And yet Charles Norris in all the portentous length of "Brass" does not introduce one Nordic (to be sure he is not a Californian). His characters, whatever his intention, were Alpines and degenerated Mediterraneans; although Nordics, in two-thirds of California at least, flourish like the green bay tree. The streets of San Francisco swarm with them, descendants of the venturesome spirits who founded the city; and it was Americans of this old stock that created the other cities and towns in California before the south was swamped by the middle west. But Mr. Norris was carried away by a passing fashion, the demand of embittered youth for another public expression of its own displeasure. His hero was really a Nordic, but unfortunately Mr. Norris did not guess it, and so missed *his* opportunity.

Mr. Grant, in his book, predicted the defeat of Germany upon the entrance of the United States into the war, owing to the fact that it could not stand up against another Nordic army. Although it is safe to say that only Nordics enlisted, the draft caught all eligibles of the other races and, worse luck, many of them were made officers. The generals, however, and the West Point officers were Nordics. Otherwise we should have lost the war, for Nordics have inherited throughout thousands of years not only the warrior genius but the necessary sense of discipline. The best of the rank and file were Nordics, whose American keen sense of personal liberty may have chafed at so much sudden discipline, but who submitted to it with the minimum of grumbling and with that thoroughbred inherited military instinct that precluded any fundamental resentment. And yet Mr. Dos Passos in his story "Three Soldiers" ignores this predominant class as completely as if it had died of flu on the way over. His three characters were plain American scum. Their ignorance was abysmal. They had inherited nothing from the past but a determination to survive with the least possible effort and risk, and were as little capable of enduring discipline as of administering it. There was not a ray of intelligence nor an ideal among them. It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Dos Passos nor to his admirers that if his book had been a truthful picture of our army we should be German subjects today. However, judging from his name, it is possible that his bias is a matter of complexion and that if he ever heard of the Nordic race he honors it with a resentful hatred. At all events we have the antidote in "The Wasted Generation".

Will not our "younger school", having worked off the bitterness of their reactions to sentimental and optimistic fiction and to the war, give the Nordics a chance? They have only to devote a reasonable amount of time to causes instead of dealing exclusively with effects. Let them realize before they begin to write to what *race* their characters belong. *Class* is of vastly less importance.

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THE POEMS OF THE MONTH

Selected by Elinor Wylie

THE December magazines—or rather such of them as it was possible for one swift and industrious reader to consume—contained in the opinion of this reader much good verse. I have found it extremely difficult to refrain from choosing at least a dozen poems and relying on an indulgent editor to find space for them; but since I am limited to half a dozen, here they are, and I shall hope that you discovered the others for yourselves. I am particularly struck by the fact that the best verse printed during this auspicious month was written by the young. Turning to Mr. de la Mare I am immediately repulsed by the word *unbelliferous*, nor can I honestly say I like Thomas Hardy's poem in "The New Republic" with anything approaching the wholehearted liking I have for those of Mr. Auslander and Miss Bogan. These two poems, one so pleasantly sleepy and the other so refreshingly sharp, are good examples of their authors' distinct and striking gifts.

I had hoped that I would find Winifred Welles's poem about Gabriel in the December "Measure", but I see that it did not appear until the January issue of that most delightful little magazine, which is bringing out a surprising quantity of fine stuff at present. The December number has excellent work in it. I like Maxwell Anderson's "The Beggar God" and also Francis Carlin's charming lyrics, but since I must choose I like best of all Maxwell Bodenheim's sonnets to his wife, of which I think the first is possibly the more distinguished, though it seems a thousand pities to separate them. Perhaps the editor will let me put them both in.

The other poems which I have selected are both by young writers; in fact I think Mr. Bodenheim must be the Methuselah of my group. In spite of my very strong predilection for rhymed verse I find both of these poems too charming to resist.

DAWN AT THE RAIN'S EDGE

The drowsy, friendly, comfortable creak
Of axles arguing and wet spokes gleaming,
When old empty tumbrels blunder dreaming,
too sleepy to speak,
Blunder down the road in the rain dreaming.

And the house-lights rub at the shining dripping shadows
Over the windows; through the drenched silver willows; everywhere:
In the sulphurous fluctuant marsh this side the steaming meadows
Where black weeds trouble the moon's drowned hair.

There is a sudden fuss of draggled feathers and the swing
Of winds in a hissing burst of raindrops; then a cry
Of colour at the hill's rim; a strange bright glimmering;
And a lark talking madness in some corner of the sky.

Joseph Auslander
—*The New Republic*

MEDUSA

I had come to the house, in a cave of trees
Facing a sheer sky
Everything moved: a bell hung ready to strike,
Sun and reflection wheeled by.

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When the bare eyes were before me
And the hissing hair,—
Held up at a window, seen through a door,
The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead
Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now,
Nothing will ever stir;
The end will never brighten it more than this
Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall and will not fall,
And the tipped bell make no sound.
The grass will be always growing for hay
Deep on the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow
Under the great balanced day,
My eyes on the yellow dust that was lifting in the wind
And does not drift away.

Louise Bogan
—*The New Republic*

TWO SONNETS TO MY WIFE

I

Because her voice is Schönberg in a dream
In which his harshness plays with softer keys
This does not mean that it is void of ease
And cannot gather to a strolling gleam.
Her voice is full of manners, and they seem
To place a masquerade on thought and tease
Its strength until it finds that it has knees,
And whimsically leaves its heavy scheme.

Discords can be the search of harmony
For worlds that lie beyond the reach of poise
And must be captured with abandoned hands.
The music of my wife strives to be free,
And often takes a light unbalanced voice
While madly walking over thoughtful lands.

II

My wife relents to life and does not speak
Each moment with a deft and rapid note.
Sometimes a clumsy wierdness finds her throat
And ushers in a music that is weak
And bargains with the groping of her heart.
But even then she plays with graver tones
That do not sell themselves to laughs and moans,
But seek the counsel of a deeper art.

She drapes her loud emotions in a shroud
Of glistening thought that waves above their dance,
And sometimes parts to show their startled eyes.
The depths of mind within her have not bowed
To sleek emotion with its amorous glance.
She slaps its face and laughs at its surprise!

Maxwell Bodenheim
—*The Measure*

MOODS OF WOMEN

Going home, six o'clock; summer evening

Men go to women, mutely, for their peace,
And they who lack it most create it when
They make, because they must, loving their men
A solace for sad bosom-bended heads. There
Is all the meagre peace men get—no otherwhere,
No mountain space, no tree with placid leaves,
Or heavy gloom beneath a young girl's hair;
No sound of valley bell on autumn air,
Or room made home with doves along the eaves
Ever holds peace like this, poured by poor women
Out of their hearts' poverty, for worn men.

Genevieve Taggard
—*The Lyric West*

THE LOVE-SONG

I am more tall to-day than ever before;
So great is my pride, as I sing aloud your song,
That the city street seems like the deck of a ship
Breasting far waves of cloud. The world moves thus
Out on its seas of air to the tune of your song,
Rising and falling under the straight noon sun.

You would never know your song, I am shouting it so,
But shouting is fine, when the waves of the sea run high!
Loud notes flung to the wind and carried away
Down through the shining water and shining air!
Shouting is fine, when a ship moves under your feet,
And all of your being is full of remembered song!

I am so tall to-day! I can almost forget
Your notes were made for another, and not for me;
And sung in the quiet dark with a voice that trembled—
Now from afar, and under the deep noon sky,
I do not care to know if she understood—
Let there be shouting—shouting into the sun!
For to all the world the street is only the street
Where one may pass who sings that her heart is full;
And none must know that the street is plunging before me,
Downward and down to the constant rhythm of singing—
Sucked to the whirlpool dark in the surging of music—
Rudderless—lost—in the song that is not forgotten.

Bernice Lesbia Kenyon
—*Scribner's Magazine*

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TO THE FRIENDS OF "OUT OF THE SHADOW"

By Rose Gollup Cohen

(This paper originally was part of a letter to a friend and was not intended for print. But this friend, who is also an editor, urged me to publish it, and I consented.

Not having had a public in mind then, I soon blissfully forgot even the one person for whom it was intended. It is rather intimate, almost too personal. But since it is to be used at all, I beg to dedicate gratefully this bit in answer to the many friends and reviewers who have shown a deep and kindly concern for my book, and who have wondered how it came to be written, what led up to it.)

AFTER my marriage,—of which there is a suggestion at the end of "Out of the Shadow",—because of my belief in economic independence for women, and also because for me personally it was necessary, I continued to work until my little daughter was born. And now twenty-four hours' work a day began for me. We lived on the East Side in three rooms of a small rear house. Close to our windows the dusky wall of a big church rose. The sun never came into our house. My baby was not strong. I had to stay in a great deal, and life closed about us a bit. Now and then singing came from the church. My baby must learn of the beautiful things outside in the world. "Listen, darling, listen,"—I propped her up in the crib. "Listen. Music." And she listened attentively and then pursing her baby mouth repeated slowly, "Muk—sy". My baby must also know flowers. When I bought soup greens I divided the bunch in half; part went into the soup, and part, the freshest, greenest bit of parsley, went into a tiny blue vase. I placed it on the mantel where the baby could look at it from the crib. "See, dear heart, flowers!" A friend who heard me once exclaimed, "Why Rose! You are giving the child the wrong idea of what flowers are." But my baby seemed immune to wrong ideas. For she never said the word. She grinned deliciously. She screwed up her little mouth, but the word that always came was "prettie".

I managed to find time to brood. "Wretched being," I told myself. "With the love of the two, how can you!" But it was so. Our doctor, who was our fairy during these days, —indeed during all our days she has been more than "doctor" to us,—said, "How is it, oh, how is it? Your race has gone through so much, suffered so. Yet you have never learned to be patient." But it seems to me that I was patient, most of the time anyway.

Sometimes letters came; then I looked forward with joy and excitement to answering them. But to write even the shortest letter involved such hardship and labor. My spelling was wretched. To this day I can spell the smallest word in a half-dozen different ways. It was also hard to decide where a sentence should begin and where it should end. Often a whole evening was spent, precious hours when the baby was asleep, in answering a single letter. And then just as likely as not it would never be sent. I could not bear the thought of the recipient's seeing it. And the cause for discontent seemed more clear. "I cannot even write a short letter without hard-

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ship and shame. I am hopelessly ignorant." Sometimes I tried to imagine how it would feel to be able to dash off a letter quickly. It seems to me that a person picturing to himself the luxury that a half million dollars could buy would not experience greater satisfaction than I felt in seeing myself write a letter with ease.

When the child was about three years old we moved to a part of the city where there was more sky, more air, and big empty lots. Here the child began to thrive. My own health, which had not been good, also began to improve. From our windows now we could see a great stretch of sky, housetops, grassy lots. The sun came into our rooms. My eyes opened wider. I breathed more deeply. But with my renewed health increased my discontent with myself and my longing to write. But no! That is not the word. Even at this moment such an assumption, such an ambition of a woman who could scarcely hold a pen in her hand, actually scares me. No, that was not the word. The plain ordinary, everyday desire was "just to write a letter". The other was a dream, indulged in now and then just as you might indulge in listening to music.

When the child was about four years old and I could leave her more with her father, I proposed to join an elementary English class at the Rand School. My husband encouraged me to do so. But what with the work of the home, and the work in the class, which I found hard or rather took hard, I broke down in the middle of the term. Two years later, however, I began again, at the Rand School. And to my teacher there I am much indebted for his encouragement and help. It was really my start. During the first term in this class we had to write compositions in exposition and argumentation. I worked hard at this form of composition, so hard indeed, and with so little success, that my teacher was actually worried when he looked at me. But all my effort was no use. My work was the poorest in the class. In fact it was not argumentation nor exposition at all, not even of a poor kind. The meaning, the definition, did not begin to penetrate.

"This is description and narration," my teacher told me crossly. He was cross because I was trying so hard and was not succeeding. If I had not been trying so hard he would not have cared. To me, on the other hand, it mattered a great deal when someone else besides myself cared for what I was doing. It made me double my effort. But in this case it was no use and I lamented my stupidity. However, as the term lengthened I became aware that I was *learning* nevertheless. I was learning to hold a thought. When I wanted to write about peas, my mind could now hold the thought until my hand put down slowly, clumsily, what I wanted to say, instead of, as before, wandering off into beans.

At the end of the term we were to have narration and description. Strangely, to this form of composition I looked forward with a fever of excitement. And when the time came mine was among the best work. Tucked away in the drawer of my desk is a composition marked, "Your work has distinct literary merit." At the time, I remember, I rushed home with it, looked up each of the three words in the dictionary, and my dreams began to soar to great heights.

The following term I went into the advanced English class. My instructor now was a man who himself was a writer, Joseph Gollomb. He said to

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the class, "The easiest writing to do is to write of your own experience. Go home, get Mary Antin's 'The Promised Land', read it, and then sit down and write your own story—briefly."

I could not get "The Promised Land". And when I sat down and thought over my life I did not know where to begin or what to say. I became fearfully discouraged. A night in the class showed me that it was entirely too advanced for me. Most of the students were at least public school graduates. Many had also had business training. And still others of foreign birth, French, Russian, German, Scotch, had studied all their lives. What could I do in a class of this kind? Nor could I see how I could crowd all my life into a few pages. I realized that to do that, one must really know how to *write*. If a bit of vanity remained to me from the other class, it was now gone. But give up I would not. "I'll do my best," I thought, and I began in a very humble spirit. I said to myself, "Now, don't assume you know. For you see that you don't. Begin simply, without any frills, and then perhaps you can pull through to the end of the term." Then I began my paper. On the following week I handed it in. The week after that, imagine my amazement when my teacher read it as the best composition in the class. "I was born in a Russian village. Our home was a log house covered with a straw roof...." This paper was the first chapter of "Out of the Shadow".

My teacher said, "I don't suppose you can write any more of it." I believe he thought that it had "happened". Anyhow, in saying this he had touched a peculiar part of my character. No sooner did he say, *"You cannot"*, than I felt that I *could*, and saw all the reasons in the world why I *should*. So I wrote the second chapter. And now every week, or every two or three weeks, I would write a chapter and my teacher would read it to his class. It was wonderfully helpful to hear it read aloud. From the corner of the room where I always liked to sit I could see all the students. And from the expression of their faces I could tell which parts interested them and which did not. This was a help for the next chapter. It gave me an idea of what to put in, what to leave out. These readings gained for me many friends among the students. Some came and asked me how it was done. Of course I had nothing to tell them. One beautiful red-haired girl came and asked me to let her typewrite the chapters for me.

So about a quarter of the book was written, the Russian part. The rest I wrote at home. A great part of it I would send to my teacher chapter by chapter, no matter where he was. And he would wade through my miserable scribble and send me a word of approval and encouragement. Often, I suspect, he did not wade through it. But the word of encouragement came anyway. He was not the only friend who helped. There was a beautiful American girl who continued when he left off.

And the chapters gathered on the desk in a great heap. What for? I did not know. My eyes were now fixed on a certain point in the story, in our life, as an end to reach. And for this end I aimed. I could not have stopped now any more than I could have stopped the wind from blowing. I was started and I had to go on. All my energy, all my strength, all the longing of all my life went into it, in getting this thing done. Just grant that I may complete this one thing, became my daily prayer. My husband and my

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little daughter helped. Seeing now that I must write, that I must see the end of this thing, they helped with their criticism when I read the chapters aloud to them, they helped with their sympathy and understanding. They helped by leaving me alone. Now on getting through with my household duties I quickly hurried to the desk in a corner of our sitting room. On seeing me, a look of understanding would pass between the two. He would place his finger on his lips, "Hush". Then I could see him from the corner of my eye take two coats, one little one and a great big one. She would slip her tiny hand into his and they would tiptoe out. They would go to the library. There I pictured her playing on the sidewalk, and him sitting inside at a window from which he could see her, reading. He is a great reader.

And into the quiet of my room now my old life came pouring in. Childhood scenes in Russia, Cherry Street days in America, people and things passed before my eyes as vividly as the pictures on the screen. And I sat there and lived it all over again, and wrote and rewrote each little word, each sentence, many times until I could see it as clearly on the paper as it was in my heart. When I succeeded, a deep, quiet joy filled me.

But it was not always so simple. As time passed there came hardships, discouragement, and illness. There came nights of lying awake when a single sentence, the torment of the day, would pass and repass before my wakeful eyes and it seemed as if my hair must turn white. But the next day I had to go on again. There came much loneliness. I had grown away from my family or, more truly, they had grown away from me. Often when they had wanted me I could not come; then a time came when they no longer needed me—so much. Friends, too, dropped off. And the question came, what was I doing it for? Outside the sun shone, people were going out in groups, their laughter came to me. I was staying day after day cooped up in a little room four flights up. Alone, always alone. What for? To what end? I had to go on. But I used to pull down the shades that I might not see the sun.

And the chapters gathered on the desk, and the years passed, and the end was reached. It seemed strange when I came to the end. It was autumn then and we were away from home in a little dilapidated farmhouse rented for the summer and furnished with boxes and bits of cretonne. That morning I was washing outside in the shade of a lilac tree. "I am through," I told myself. "I am through. I have reached the end." But there seemed no emotion left. Nor did it seem possible that I could be through. Started, it seemed it must go on forever. There *could* be no end. Then when after days I realized that after all I had reached the end, at least the end I had in mind, I felt lost. It felt strange to get up in the morning and find that I had nothing to do—nothing but housework.

Christopher Morley was the first person to read the complete typewritten manuscript, and he wrote me a letter which of course I still have, and told me to use his name in offering it about. It was accepted by the second publisher I offered it to. The notice of its acceptance came on a Saturday, a day before Christmas. It is hard for me to describe that moment of reading the note. My husband was not in the room. As I opened the sheet my eyes caught the words, "We

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shall be glad to publish it". Then the words ran together and I could not separate them. I had to sit down. It was my little daughter who read the note over my shoulder and explained it to me. When my husband came in a moment later and found what had happened, he scolded: "You little foolish! Didn't you know it would be published? What is there to be so upset about?" Oh no, I did not know. And I looked up with a feeling of real admiration at the height and breadth of so much masculine confidence. Then I saw him go and lean against the radiator, and I saw his own lips grow white.

Of course I have continued to write. Since the publication of "Out of the Shadow" I have been taking courses in short story writing at Hunter College, at Columbia University. I owe much of what I know of writing to all of my teachers, from the blue-eyed girl in the Thomas Davidson School long ago, who explained a sentence to me, to my present teachers.

Since the book I have published in THE BOOKMAN, "Life and Labor", "Pictorial Review", "The Touchstone". The story in "The Touchstone" was the first bit of impersonal work I have done. After years of writing in the first person of personal experiences, it has been hard to break the habit. But I am succeeding. My aim is to write, telling of the life among the Jews on Cherry Street from which I come, among the Russian peasants from whom I come, and among the Americans among whom I am.

RED RIBBON

By H. Underwood Hoyt

THANK you for wearing something red today!
I've wanted red.
There have been so many people around
With rain clothes, drab-on-purpose things,
With damp thoughts and dull-on-purpose thoughts.
Thank you, thank you, thank you
For wearing that clear red ribbon on your blouse.
It sings,
It is you.
You are a lover of the stars—
I believe you are a friend of Pegasus.
Are his wings gold today,
In some other sky?
I believe you have danced on Olympus
And sung with the men who are gods.
I believe you don't mind all this rain and weather
I believe you can forget the smell of raincoats
You lover of crimson!

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THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF WRITING

By Robert Cortes Holliday

(In connection with Mr. Holliday's series, THE BOOKMAN *announces a new Bureau of Practical Advice to Writers. Any question regarding the mechanical details of authorship will be answered by the editor or referred to the proper authority. The best of these questions and answers will, from time to time, be published, for the information of those interested.*—J. F.)

I: HOW TO APPROACH THE MODERN EDITOR

NEW YORK, *February,* 1922.

THE letter read:

I am what is known as a "budding" author, and I need some pruning and care. The rejection slips I am accumulating are like early frosts—they blight the fruit. What I need is a little of the sunshine of success.

It came from—well, it might have come from anywhere in the United States. It was addressed to a New York magazine editor. He was, I think, about to cast it into the scrap basket. Doubtless, he got many like it. And he has a great many important things on his mind, poor fellow! Life with him is a matter of high pressure. Also, it was about time to knock off for luncheon.

The letter was signed by one who had been christened Isabel. Her name rang in my mind all the afternoon. In the evening I was supposed to begin an article for THE BOOKMAN; in fact, I was supposed to have begun that article several days before. But I couldn't keep from thinking about the budding Isabel, who needed pruning and care that she might enjoy a little of the sunshine of success. I just had to answer her letter, as well as I could. You see, I don't know her personally; and I suppose it would not be the proper thing for me to address her directly; so (as I do not have to buy space at advertising rates for inserting matter in this magazine) I print my letter here, in the hope that she may chance to see it.

My dear Isabel:

I do not know definitely what your experience so far has been as a writer, so much of what I say here may sound to you very elementary. I mention such matters because I have found that many very elementary things in the writing business are apparently quite unknown to large numbers of people who are trying to make their way into a writing career.

Here's a perennial illustration of this fact: About November first every year multitudes of novice writers apparently sit down and turn out Christmas stories. The Christmas numbers of most monthly magazines, everybody knows, are published around the middle of November. And you'd think that anybody would know that anything that goes into them would have to be written not much later than August, even when it had been arranged for in advance and the author did not face the possibility of loss of considerable time in having to submit his story first one place then another.

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So, Isabel, I'll venture to begin at the very beginning. You have manuscripts to sell. There are several ways of going about the matter. (1) Through a literary agent. (2) Submitting directly by mail. (3) Through personal friends of the editor. (4) By calling upon the editor. Also, a good deal that appears in magazines is written on assignment.

The literary agent, his functions, advantages and limitations, were discussed in the November number of THE BOOKMAN, in this department of the magazine.

Suppose you submit your manuscript directly by mail. What happens to it? It is received and listed or entered; that is, it is probably given a number; this together with the name of the author and the title of the manuscript is recorded in a ledger; and the manuscript is placed in a safe or cabinet to await its turn to be read. It is more than likely that there are a good many other manuscripts ahead of it in this safe or cabinet. In the entry book of one of our best known monthly magazines the manuscripts recorded as received in one day not infrequently number as many as seventy-odd. The lowest number of manuscripts listed as received on any day is seldom less than twenty-something.

Next step in editorial routine: your manuscript goes to a reader. He (or she) may spend two minutes on it, maybe even less time. If this first reader regards the manuscript as flatly impossible it is (provided return postage has been enclosed with it) sent back to the author at once. If the manuscript is bulky and you want it returned express collect, you should so state in a note accompanying it when it is submitted. It is advisable, in order to engage at once the good will of the reader, for manuscripts to be neat in appearance. On the other hand, it has been my experience and observation that publishers' readers are inclined to feel something of a prejudice toward manuscripts that are got up in anything like a fancy way.

If your manuscript holds this first reader to the end it is (in some offices) passed on to another reader, or several other readers. It is then likely to go to the editor himself, with a report on it reading something like this:

January 9, 1922.

THE HAILSTONE
By John M. Headpiece
9876

This is cleverly done with a surprise at the climax. We might consider it if you'd care to use a ms. of the type of "Twins". Artificial but interesting. After a violent summer storm a New Yorker cuts out of a paper an article about hailstones large enough to kill a man should one of them hit one, and takes it to his club, where, at lunch with other members, he comments on it. One of the party denies the truth of this and tells a story to prove his point. I don't think he does prove it, but the story he tells is ingenious.

It is obviously impossible for the editor of a widely circulated magazine to read all the manuscripts that are submitted to his publication. On the other hand, as he is responsible for everything that he publishes, he must make the final selection from the available manuscripts. It is the reader's job to separate the available from those that are unquestionably not available, and his report tells the editor three important things: (1) something about the subject and plot of the story; (2) the outstanding feature of the story; (3) in what manner the author has handled his material.

In the case of "The Hailstone", the reader decided that the manuscript was available, because (1) the subject was odd and interesting and the

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plot ingenious; (2) the outstanding feature was the surprise at the climax; and (3) although artificial the story was interesting and cleverly done.

The editor may decide from this report, without reading the manuscript, that this is not the kind of story that at the moment he wants. Or he may read the story and not agree with the opinion of his reader as to its cleverness. Or he may read the story and decide to take it.

The procedure just outlined is that which usually prevails in editorial offices. There is this, however, to be said about magazines: All kinds of shops may be said to be in the shop business. All magazines certainly are in the magazine business. But in their policies, practices, and requirements magazines are frequently as different one from another as a lingerie shop is different from a cigar store. There are magazines where this system of handling manuscripts is practically reversed; where the editor himself looks first at everything that comes in; weeds out the hopeless at a glance; and employs his readers mainly in checking up his own judgments of manuscripts which he has under consideration.

Do not expect or demand an immediate decision on your manuscript. Some editors take a week, some six months—which is about the limit. Publishers assume no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts in their hands; keep a carbon copy of everything that you send out.

Send your manuscripts to those magazines only which you know to be reliable—there are some magazines that do not bother to return rejected manuscripts; there are others that do not pay for accepted material. Handle your manuscripts on a sound business basis—a business man would not send goods on consignment to a stranger without credit. If you *want* to send a manuscript to the "Piebald Monthly", at Hohockum, Iowa, why of course all right; but first know just what you are doing.

Do not send manuscripts to a magazine until you have a fair idea of the kind of thing that magazine uses. A note something like this turns up every once in a while in a publishing office:

> This is the first fiction story I have ever finished up and made a definite effort to sell. I have submitted it to "Metropolitan" and "Everybody's", for which I realize myself it is totally unfitted.

What a confusion of objectives is revealed in the letter before me! It begins:

> I enclose herewith an article entitled "The Unknown Soldier". I have sent it to "The Atlantic Monthly", "Judge", and "The Ladies' Home Journal", all of which publications have declined to accept it.

And the practice of innumerable (as you say, Isabel) "budding" authors seems to be to send whatever they have, no matter what its nature, first to "The Saturday Evening Post".

There are a number of publications, both periodicals and bound volumes, which may be found of service in acquainting one's self with the names and addresses, the character and the needs of American magazines. The way recommended by the editors of most of the leading magazines for a study of the "market" is to regard attentively the magazines themselves. One point in particular, which should be obvious enough, but which editors frequently are wont to complain of, is that new writers so little note the length of the contributions used in their periodicals. Don't send a seven thousand word manuscript to a magazine in which you have never seen

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anything over twenty-five hundred words long.

Don't continue to send out a manuscript in which you have totally lost faith. From the note of a young author upon receiving his rejected story:

> I have written and copied it so often that I am perfectly disgusted with it and can see no good thing in it. I have such beautiful ideas and when I begin on the mechanical part of writing or typing, I find that it is not at all what I want it to be.

Well, though, of course, every artist feels something of that.

Don't send futile letters to editors. This kind of thing:

> I do not believe that I overestimate myself when I say that I know I have unusual ideas along fiction lines.

It accomplishes nothing for the author of a manuscript to tell an editor, as some novices do: "I have been told often that I was born to write." It does not impress the editor overmuch to hear that:

> After reading some of my work one of my school teachers years ago was or seemed to be very much enthused over it, and was sure I could enter without any trouble the world of literary work which I have always wanted so much to do.

And so on. Simply tell 'em (if you want to) that you have had (if you have had) work published in such and such places, that you are willing (if you are willing) to cut the manuscript any amount, what (if you are going away for a while) your address will be during the next couple of months or so. Such things.

A tendency very prevalent among writers beginning to seek admission to the magazines is that of referring, in a letter to the editor, to some well-known person as a friend of theirs: "Mr. John Farrar, editor of THE BOOKMAN, has urged me to send this manuscript to you." Usually the case is that Mr. Farrar (say) has no acquaintance at all with the person using his name; he may merely have said in rejecting that person's article that it was better suited to a magazine of more general character than THE BOOKMAN. So this dodge is without effect, unless perhaps it inclines the editor to take a rather slighting view of the character of the writer who employs it.

Some occult power evidently is attributed by innumerable beginner writers to letters of introduction from eminent persons. Such letters are continually being sought by strategy, and more than occasionally by blunt demand. As a rule, perfunctory letters of introduction are without any efficacy. Indeed, they may even work the wrong way. An important man at first friendly to the young writer may be annoyed at being held up by him for such a letter; and the editor to whom it goes may feel annoyance toward the bearer of the letter for attempting to run in under his guard in such a way. This, of course, is not at all to say that when the use of a well-known name, or a letter of introduction from one of established reputation, is *volunteered*, this is not a good office to the unknown writer. But it won't sell a manuscript—where that manuscript does not intrinsically belong.

No idea, probably, is more firmly entrenched in the mind of the "struggling" young writer than the notion that if only he (or she) can, by some hook or crook, break in to see the editor himself face to face, everything will be all right. It is not impossible that sometimes the neophyte writer may gain something by a personal interview. But what does not seem to occur at all to those endeavoring to launch themselves as writers, is that there is considerable danger, too, in

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confronting an editor in person; ardent souls are very apt to overdo the matter; it may be much better to stay away.

Editors have, more often than now and then, become disinclined to a manuscript by hearing the author talk overmuch about it; and the more he has talked the deeper has grown the editor's prejudice against the manuscript. And—would you believe it, Isabel?—there are those who, having contrived to get an editor alone, put such faith in feminine wiles. It is folly to fancy that one can vamp one's way into success in literature. *The destiny of a manuscript by a writer without established reputation is in black marks on white paper.*

After a writer has become something of a regular contributor to a magazine the situation is quite different. Many editors have a keen desire to know their contributors personally, all of them. But even then there is a hazard for the writer. There is a story about this, a classic in editorial offices. A magazine editor known to everybody had been receiving through the mail a succession of highly impassioned poems. Flaming they were; stunning, in their way. He used them. Wanted more. He felt that he must see the author. Asked her if she would not call. When, at the hour of the appointment, she was announced, he rather nervously adjusted his tie, straightened the body of his coat. Considerably keyed up, he was. Then, was ushered in a little anæmic creature of an age sufficient to be his aunt. He lost his taste for the lady's poems. Perhaps the story is a fable.

I have alluded to the method of writing by assignment. Professional writers whose work is readily marketable usually sell their articles before they are written. This is done in various ways. Magazine editors frequently solicit from well-known writers articles on subjects which they have made their special field. When Joyce Kilmer was killed in France THE BOOKMAN petitioned Richard Le Gallienne for an article about him. Mr. Le Gallienne's name was an appropriate one, he had been a personal friend of Kilmer's, and his sympathies, the editor knew, were thoroughly engaged. In the course of no long time unsolicited articles about Kilmer came into THE BOOKMAN office by the score. A number of them were very good. But matters like this are almost always arranged at once.

In advance of some notable event to occur it is, of course, the general practice of editors to arrange with some writer to "cover" that event. A writer is selected whose style is in conformity with the character of the magazine in which the article is to appear. Any one of the innumerable unsolicited articles about America's "Unknown Soldier" which turned up in magazine offices after the ceremony at Arlington had less than a small chance of being taken anywhere.

Frequently writers of standing go to an editor with whom they have had dealings and say: "Such and such a thing is going to come about. I'd like to do this for you." The editor may reply: "No; we're fed up with militarism. Don't want any more about training camps." Or he may say: "Fine; go ahead. About thirty-five hundred words. Copy by the fifteenth, sure. I think you'd better treat this more from a serious than from a humorous angle. Make it as informative as possible."

A procedure much in practice is this: A writer whose work is generally known makes a list of perhaps half a dozen ideas for articles he would

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like to write. He puts down a brief outline of each idea, something like this:

HINTS ON SELLING MANUSCRIPTS

Ways of going about the matter. Literary agents. Directly by mail. Interview with editor. Editorial routine. Study of market. Different types of magazines. Editors as human beings. Rejection slips, and how to know them. Specific reasons for rejection. Outstanding faults of novice writers.

He sends this list to an editor, usually to the editor of a magazine for which he has been writing. Though he may send it, or take it, to the editor of some magazine that he simply wants to get into.

The editor probably recognizes at once certain articles that he doesn't want. He doesn't want this, say, because he already has in hand the manuscript of another article dealing with very much the same idea. He doesn't want that for the reason that he feels the subject has been done to death. He doesn't want the other as it is not in accord with the policy of his magazine; his appeal, perhaps, is to more unsophisticated readers than this article would reach. Another idea, maybe, would make an article of local rather than national interest. These items of the writer's list he checks with a "No".

But the editor, we'll say, finds on this list a couple of suggestions for articles which he would like to have. Opposite these he marks "O. K." That is a definite order. And the writer does not put in a week or two, or maybe more time, on work which may avail him nothing.

Is it feasible for an unknown or little-known writer to pursue this method with editors? Extracts from letters giving the opinions of some editors on the subject follow. These quotations are taken from an inquiry into the matter made by Frank MacCarthy, published in the July, 1921, number of "The Writer's Monthly":

The editor of "The Saturday Evening Post":

We are always willing to receive suggestions from our readers in connection with the subjects of articles and their treatment and to indicate whether or not such treatment, as outlined, is likely to be available for use in "The Post". We are not able to speak with more certainty than this in regard to manuscripts. Except in rare instances it is useless to query us in regard to short stories, so much depending upon the development of the idea.

V. Jordan, associate editor of "Everybody's Magazine":

My personal, though not official opinion, as the outcome of my experience as an editor, is that there is usually, under present conditions in the magazine field, no advantage to be gained by an unknown or little-known author by asking the editor whether he would care to see a certain kind of material.....It is rare that an unknown or little-known writer can attract the attention of an editor by any preliminary description of what he intends to write. Such questions put to an editor usually somehow tend to prejudice him against the author's work, and it is conceivable that he might turn down material which, if he were confronted with the completed stuff, he might be interested in. I know that this is unreasonable and illogical, but it is a pragmatic fact about editors, and it is not altogether their fault.

John M. Siddal of "The American Magazine":

I think it is a very sensible thing to question an editor as to the suitability of a certain subject for his magazine. It saves both the author's and the editor's time.....Of course, you understand that an affirmative answer to a query is not necessarily followed by acceptance of the finished product. Everything depends on the way the subject is handled. It may be something particularly suited to a certain magazine, but the writer may get the wrong slant, suppressing the points he should emphasize and vice versa. I would, therefore, urge the writer when he gets a favorable answer to his query to closely study the make-up of the magazine he is writing for.

Don't pester editors by writing in such questions as: Do you use poetry? or, Do you use certain kinds of articles? or, Have you room for a serial? Please go to a newsstand, or a library, and find out. As for the serial, so much depends on the serial.

Some editors suggest that in the case of a writer whose work is little known it might be well, if he writes to

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ask an editor to consider a suggestion for an article, for him to accompany his letter with an article already written, as a specimen of his style. On the whole, however, it is very probably much the wiser way for a little-known writer to send in the completed stuff, except perhaps on rare occasions when he feels pretty sure that he has an idea of considerable and immediate news value. Writing in telling editors about articles he'd like to write is so easy that he is likely to wear out an editor's patience with him, and never get a show.

Never send in to an editor a synopsis of a story. It will only exasperate him. Nothing is more hopeless than for a little-known writer to expect an editor to form any conception of what his story will be from a synopsis of it.

A word should be said about how *not* to study the magazines. Don't study them with your nose too close to the pages. If you make a classified list of periodicals you get some such group of headings as: Fashions; Home Building and Furnishing; Children's Publications; All Fiction; Literary Publications; Amusements, Sports and Travel; News Feature Journals; Humorous Publications; For Women; For Men; and so on. Of course, you can go on and refine such a general classification. The point of view of one type of "literary" journal, for instance, may be discernible as decidedly more æsthetic than that of another type. A manuscript sent to the "Broom" might ring the bell, that sent to THE BOOKMAN would miss fire. And the other way about,—the field of one magazine, of course, very frequently overlaps the field of another. An article with a literary subject might be quite suitable to a humorous publication.

There is this to be considered: magazines, weekly publications usually, devoted mainly or altogether to current happenings, to news, use very little that comes in to them unsolicited; almost all of their contents are the product of assignments. Though certainly any novel and timely article that might crop up in the mail, if it were well done, appropriate to the character of the magazine, and on a subject not already covered by the editor, would get attentive consideration.

Then one might add to his classified list a little group of all-star magazines. There are two classes of writers occupying quite opposite positions; unknown writers who are striving tooth and nail to get their work published, and writers of achieved popularity pursued continually by editors. You will find a few magazines made up altogether of "headliners". These magazines have little or no interest in what may come in to them from obscure writers. They "go out after" the work of the writers they want. Asked the other day about what proportion of the material he was using came to him unsought, the editor of one of these magazines replied, "None at all."

The idea frequently encountered among unknown writers, however, that there is everything in a "name", is a fallacy. The editor of one of the best of our monthly magazines told not long ago that but a short time before he had in one week returned articles by Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw, George Moore, and I have forgotten what other highly distinguished writers. He had used instead work of freshness, of charm, or of power by writers with their careers nearly all before them. An intense interest in new writers is the attitude of plenty of magazine editors. "New writers are the life of the magazine business," de-

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clared an editor the other day, the editor of one of the most widely circulated substantial magazines in the country. A few minutes later, in another office, I heard the editor of another of our leading magazines say: "New writers are the hope of the whole situation."

Which way the wind blows in the several matters that have just been discussed, is what is to be got from a study of the magazines by the new writer. He most certainly should not sit down and try to imitate slavishly any distinctive tricks that he may find. The editor of a very vivacious and popular magazine recently remarked that he was sometimes appalled by the evidence of the harm that apparently his publication had done to novice writers. Many, it seems, in their earnest endeavor to write something that will be his kind of thing, grotesquely parody the style of that periodical and, of course, so squelch any innate gift that may be their own.

The young writer should study his rejection slips closely, and take to heart every suggestion he is lucky enough to receive from an editor. So anxious are editors to discover and cultivate talent that, when they receive a manuscript of extraordinary promise, they will go out of their way to encourage the author.

In such cases the manuscript will not be returned with the usual:

We have read your story with keen interest and regret to say that, although it is not without merit, we cannot accept it for publication at the present time.

But it will be sent back with a helpful letter:

It seems to us that you really have a feeling for and understanding of boys of the boarding school age and the sort of life they actually lead in school and out of it, but we do not consider that your story contains sufficiently consistent, well developed plot to make a successful juvenile. The individual episodes are often well presented, but the story as a whole is not knit together with sufficient closeness to hold the juvenile public.

Here is real encouragement and valuable information. Yet many a young author is bitterly disappointed by just such criticism, and immediately runs to his personal friends with both the letter and the story. "Do you think this criticism is justified?" he asks. And the friends, desiring to remain friends, and, incidentally, knowing very little if anything about the "juvenile public" and what will hold it, emphatically reply: "No, indeed! The editors are simply trying to save their faces. They don't want your story, because you haven't a big name like Ralph Henry Barbour, or somethin', and they're afraid to tell you so." Take the praise of relatives, friends, and others not in the writing business with a handful of salt.

Nobody, of course, can give you a skeleton key that will open editorial doors. All that can be done, Isabel, is to attempt to reflect something of the atmosphere and the talk of editorial offices.

Sincerely yours,

MURRAY HILL

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THE LONDONER

"Queen Victoria" a Success—Books and No-Books—Poetry and Journalism —Subjects for Poetical Treatment—The Rewards of Novelists and Business Men—Literary Malthusianism and Overproduction—Criticism and Prejudice.

LONDON, *January* 1, 1922.

BY the time these words are in print it will be quite an old year, of course; but here, at the moment of writing, it is a new one, and we are just beginning to take stock of the year that has passed. The general tendency, I find, is to look upon 1921 as a bad, disagreeable year, which is to be forgotten as soon as possible. Its books are not to be recalled; its defeats in the world of sport are to be avenged; and only its obituaries give it any place in the history of the world. It is true that the last month of the year brought to a close two enormously long legal lives, and saw various political happenings of importance. These things do not concern us. We look only to the real things, such as literature and sport. Here there is nothing to rejoice over, except the success of Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria".

"Queen Victoria" has had a quite genuine success, which has revived and increased the already notable success of the same author's "Eminent Victorians". This is a success unlike some other successes, for while many successes are not successes at all it is a real success. That is to say, the books have not only had the success of large sales; they have had that of serious appreciation by the best judges now living. They have been read widely and discussed widely (perhaps still more widely). I am not sure whether they are mentioned in the Pantomimes. I do not think they are. If they were, then I can imagine no lengths to which the books might not go.

* * * *

It is a curious thing how relative a thing success is. We do not always understand what we mean by the term. Do we mean the success of estimation or the success of material rewards? I use the word indiscriminately, but generally as meaning, I am afraid, a large sale. But not always. When one reads a book, one seems to ask whether it is a "success", and in the degree in which we have responded to the author's mood lies the degree of the book's success. The moment we say that a book is clever, it is not a success. No book ought to strike us as clever. It should strike us as a book, as a personal thing. One of the defects of some of the most able novels which are being written now is that, having read them, we make comments upon the book, and have no curiosity at all about the author. This means that, however sincere the work is, it is lacking in the very thing which alone can justify the continued writing of books—originality. A book which we read as a book, and then leave, cannot be a good book. The good book may be full of badnesses, if you like; but it must be a BOOK.

That is why some of us think that H. G. Wells is a bit of a writer. I

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cannot say whether I could reread one of Wells's books. It may be an impossible feat. All the same, he writes books which are books.

* * * *

This is all aside from what I meant to write about, which is the kind of literature that we are sometimes bidden to regard as the only possible form (because the only disinterested form) which is being written today. I mean, of course, poetry. The other afternoon I was talking quietly and modestly about deep things to a comparative stranger, when our conversation was as it were penetrated by a terrible remark. A hideous voice said: "...It's very remarkable that in these days, when poetry is absolutely at its lowest ebb..." You may say that I was at a debating society. I wasn't. I was in a club which accommodates some of the most excellently educated men in London. My neighbors were two such men. The speaker continued with eloquence to speak of ancient poets, from Æschylus to Cowley, quoting them in their original languages and making remarks upon works unquoted. He announced that he considered the work of Rupert Brooke good. But he said: "...It's very remarkable that in these days, when poetry is absolutely at its lowest ebb, there should be so much good work, which attracts no attention, in the way of translation from Greek and Latin. Verrall is even better than Murray, and Verrall is translating from the Latin, which is more difficult than Greek."

I was stunned by such conversation occurring so near me; and could hardly continue my own modest dissertations upon virtue and worth. What would have been the scene had my companion been the young poet who had been in my company on that very spot only a few days previously, I cannot imagine. There might have been bloodshed. For while our poets are very pure and disinterested in their work, they are perfect furies when their art (or craft) is aspersed. They are among the most loyal to their friends. They support them through thick and thin. Especially do they resent any suggestion that this is not a great period for poetry. Once I made a suggestion in these pages as to the relative slump in the popularity of poetry, and I received almost by return mail an American journal containing a rejoinder (by a poet), in which a threat was conveyed that my identity would be revealed if I did not comport myself more suitably. Under this threat, of course, I kept silent (who would not have done so!); and so the world was allowed to forget me for a space. Now, however, I hear that a scheme is on foot to publish a new volume of "Georgian Poetry", and I rally.

There is no doubt, I suppose, that the three or four volumes of "Georgian Poetry" were main factors in making the public aware that there was such a thing in existence as contemporary verse. Poets may for generations go on publishing collections of verse, and these books will be noticed in small type in various newspapers. They will be praised in some of the papers, and superlatives will be used which can usefully be quoted in the collection that follows, but the public remains very little impressed by small type superlatives, because it has seen so much of this sort of thing. When, on the other hand, what is called "a body of work" is gathered together, and an air of solidity and solidarity is created, the case is altered. The public is impressed. Mr. Marsh, the editor of "Georgian Poetry", has been re-

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sponsible, as a consequence, for very much of the general acceptance which poetry written by contemporaries has enjoyed in the last decade. Something of the same sort happened when a selection of the best of our younger novelists fell by chance, and the publisher's enterprise, into the list of Martin Secker round about the years 1911-1914. The novel boom came then, and we were told how good these young men were. The poetry boom came later.

It was a more genuine boom than that of the novelists, and it was more deliberately organized (I use that phrase without innuendo). We definitely became aware that there were poets in our midst. A periodical to which four poets contributed had some effect, and then the war, the war sonnets of Rupert Brooke, and the death of Brooke, gave an extraordinary fillip to the whole movement. All the young soldiers seemed to be writing poetry. It became possible for a young poet to sell two, three, and even five thousand copies of a book of poems, and also to be acclaimed as a genius. The young poets enjoyed success of every kind. Poetry boomed. It had a glorious hour. Unfortunately, not all the poets could die in the war, and thus secure immortality for their verse. They continued among us. They no longer sang of arms and the man. It was necessary to chase a new mistress. A poet could no longer gloat upon his marvelously vivid likening of the brains cast upon the battlefield to sweetbreads as they are freely eaten. He was forced away from that venue altogether. Mr. Sassoon tried to keep on with war poetry, and was publicly rebuked by Mr. Gosse for harping upon the unpleasant theme. Even he abandoned the war. The merchant of sweetbreads took to novels and sensational journalism, another successful poet disappeared to a foreign country and drowned his poetical gift in the Red Sea. Others found their inspiration gone. The rest were faced with reality. It was necessary that they should live. They took to journalism.

This taking to journalism has been the bane of modern poetry It is to be deplored. And yet it cannot be helped. You must live, and there are few callings which leave a man free to write when he wishes to do so. And yet it is a great pity that a poet should have to take to journalism, because it does not bring in rewards great enough to support life and liberty unless it is assiduously pursued. This means that our poet-journalists have to do far too much work, and the work they do is almost inevitably that most barren of all journalism, the criticism of other writers. It is barren, because one cannot read and review on a large scale without exhausting the brain and the nerves. I speak from experience, because before the war I did much of it, and paid the penalty. Our poets, then, are using their energy in precisely the form of work most calculated to reduce their freshness and spontaneity as poets. When one is reading books one is not submitting one's self to the elements from which inspiration can be drawn with strength and mastery. What is the result? It is shown in the relative difficulty which our poets experience in finding subjects upon which they can exercise their talents. Trees served them for some time; but the varieties of trees with vulgarly recognizable names are not inexhaustible, and so poetic arboriculture came to an end. Experiments with bird-calls were looked upon with suspicion and even derision by those who had some knowledge of the actual calls. Use of the gazetteers lasted for only a

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short time. Then Mr. Masefield gave a lead. He opened up the hunting field. I do not suppose he knows very much about hunting or about steeplechasing; but he has a vivid gift, and he carried the reading world on wings from cover to cover, as Mr. Shorter was carried by Mr. Mackenzie's "Carnival". Mr. Masefield accordingly opened up a new field. We may expect all our old English sports to be rendered into verse in the near future.

And then there was the success of "Abraham Lincoln", which was the work of a poet who collaborated with the spirit of the time and made his mark. The success of this play could not fail to draw the attention of young poets to the stage. Unfortunately, while it is true that one has only to consult a biographical dictionary to discover heaps of lives which could be retold in the form of chronicles for the stage, the form is not yet assured of theatrical success, and it lends itself horribly to imposition. You may write something nearly clever enough to pass as good; but the theatre is a place where money does most of the talking; and it is a place where the hearts of dramatists and poets are broken every hour. The outlook, therefore, for poetic drama or for drama written by poets, is a bad one. I need not dwell upon this point, except to say that whatever one may think of the merit of Clemence Dane's "Will Shakespeare", and of the efforts that were made to secure success for it, the failure of that play has pretty completely dished the chances of plays written in verse about celebrated characters, plays written in verse about whatever subject you like, and plays written about those who have had an actual existence in the past.

If what I have said is true, what are the prospects? They are, I think, more journalism. It is quite impossible for any poet nowadays to make a good living—to make a living, that is to say, which enables him to cut a figure in the world of tea parties and dinner parties—out of his verse alone. I do not know of more than one volume of poetry by a young author published during 1921 which sold one thousand copies in England. Just think of it! We are nearly fifty millions, and a volume of poetry sells perhaps five hundred copies. It is desperate. Such sales make poetry once again what it was before the war—a drug on the market. It is quite true that there have been one or two anthologies which have done better; but why is that? Simply because an anthology can be given as a cheap present, or because those who pretend to a sort of literary culture can buy and dip into an anthology. Of any sign of general interest in poetry for its own sake, or of genuine interest in specific modern poets and their personalities or thoughts, there is no trace. *Spurlos Versenkt* might be the motto upon every title page of modern poetry books by individual authors. Back to journalism? Is that the only alternative?

* * * *

There is, of course, another. If you ask a poet what sort of author can make a living by his pen, he will say, almost bitterly: "The novelist." He is right. Some novelists can and do make money by the practice of their craft. Not all of them, but some. It is possible to make quite a reasonably good income from the writing of novels. Novelists have been known to rent islands, to own yachts, to drive handsome and expensive motor cars. Do poets want to do these things? Do they really? I do not believe it. But

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if they do, they can always turn to novel writing, and make money. On the other hand, they can go into business, and make much more than the novelist does. Compared with some business men, the most successful novelist is a beggar. I have heard of a business man arranging to send a guest a distance of about twenty or thirty miles to catch an important train; and, in order to make sure that there was no mistake, sending two huge Rolls-Royce motor cars—one to carry the guest, and the other to follow in case of any accident to the first one. No novelist could do that. A famous literary agent drives four-in-hand. No novelist does that. No novelist turns literary agent. It needs a special talent.

I know four brothers. Two of them make roughly five hundred pounds apiece each year. The other two make many thousands each year. They are all personally distasteful to me; but you never hear any murmuring from the poorer brothers as to the greater physical comforts enjoyed by their wealthier brethren. They have all grasped, either the fact that particular aptitudes and opportunities produce their consequences, or the greater truth that money is valuable only for its purchasing power. Whatever may be the reason, it seems to me that the brothers give a lesson in wisdom to those of our young poets who accuse novelists of commercialism. I myself have been accused many times in print of writing novels for the market. I may do this unconsciously. I do not think I do. One cannot read one's own nature or one's own impulses; but I have never written a novel merely for the sake of the money it would bring in. I mean, that I have never thought of altering my novel to suit a hypothetical public preference, or of serving up something expected. It is possible, of course, that a conventional mind may produce conventional work; but that is a misfortune, and not a plant. One writes what one can. The poets, presumably, no less than the novelists. That is why I am so alarmed at the poverty of subject which I observe straining at the vitality of all our younglings. There is not one of them from whom poetry seems to come with the true ease of singing. There is, I feel, not one who is not being dried up by journalism.

* * * *

Siegfried Sassoon, who acts as a sort of contemporary grandmother to most of the poets, seems to have embraced a theory of literary Malthusianism. He begs writers to limit their production, to take years over books, to weigh their words in accordance with some little society to which he belongs, which has at heart the purification of English. I think he is wrong. If a writer is good, it should be, as it has been in the past, within the power of his vital energy to produce copiously. The greatest writers have generally been prolific. They have written a good deal of rubbish, but they have improved. Their powers have grown. By self-sterilization such as Sassoon suggests they are more likely to dry up altogether. I would rather see in England what is happening in America—a great outburst of sometimes misdirected energy—than this horrid business of writing little and crabbing all else that is written with greater commercial success. At any rate it would show that we had some gusto and energy. If the results of fecundity are poor, the writer pays the penalty. His prestige at once begins to decline. His sales may increase; but they more probably tend to diminish. But at any rate his repu-

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tation declines, his standing; and this goes much beyond the circle of critics. It slowly grows wider and wider. I could name instances. I think on the whole I would rather trust a popular judgment than a critical one—not that I do not think criticism of value, or popular judgment sentimental and without principle. It is simply that conditions are against the production of good criticism.

I will explain why. It is practically impossible to avoid prejudice. I used to think one could; but I have come to the conclusion that one can't. I am conscious of prejudice when I read the work of a friend. It is not a determination to think well or ill of a friend's work. More or less it is a knowledge of the character of the writer, which always peeps out in his work. Possibly traits I dislike appear; sometimes I am charmed by a recollection of something altogether delightful. When I read a book by one who is not a friend, but who is known to me by reputation or by anecdote or sight, I am similarly conscious of all I have ever heard or noticed about the author. It enters into my judgment. I am also greatly influenced by what is said to me about a book. Again, this is not for or against. It is merely a derangement of my own natural judgment. What I suffer from is, I think, a disease common to all who write criticism. Directly they know anything about a writer, critics are influenced by what they know in judging any example of his work. I have noticed in my own case that information privately obtained has—perhaps unconsciously—been incorporated in reviews of my books. Those who have met me have found in the written word illustration of some trait (agreeable or disagreeable) which they have observed in conversation. This sort of thing must enter into judgments, as long as critics are not monks or anchorites. Yet it is bad. It tends to obscure the judgment, to encourage cliques and group opinions, and in the long run I think it tends to bolster up reputations in a way that real criticism would not do.

Moreover, supposing a man is successful in the worldly sense, his character is extolled by the more lick-spittling kind of critics, and unduly savaged by the puritan variety. The former have no standard but that of worldly success, because they think in terms of cash and credit alone. The latter suspect all motives but their own, and are correspondingly severe. In the long run the two extremes cancel each other, and there is no reason why the successful writer should complain. But, as in all other affairs, two wrongs do not here make a right. You have sycophancy upon the one hand; but you have puritan injustice on the other. With the best motives, and the most lofty ideals, the puritan critic may err in his priggishness as much as the encomiast does in his effusive praise.

Dispraise of successful men is a thing in which our poet-critics specialize. They should not indulge the habit, for it is based on an injustice. It is, I think, based on a prejudice. I may claim to know most of the novelists of literary reputation in England. It is true that some of them appear to be rich, appear to be prosperous, appear to be ambitious, careerist, as if they were men of business. If they are these things (and I do not think they are essentially more commercial-minded than poets), it is in strange little bursts of vanity rather than in any purposeful fashion. If they profess to write for money only it is more likely to be an ill-considered boast

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than a fact. I mean, that novelists are really very much like other people. They are very much like poets—only, of course, they make more money. But just as poets do not write novels for money, although they are driven to the writing of journalism for money, so I do not think novels are written solely for money by novelists. They may be written for what money can buy; but then all work is primarily a means of livelihood. Even poets accept remuneration, when they can get it. I fancy that a sincere investigation would disclose the fact that novelists are as a rule—except for those who proclaim their envious horror of success—as little mercenary as any in the community. But they, like poets, are very dependent upon inspiration. And if inspiration does not come, I suspect that novelists (like poets) take a look out of the window to see what other writers have said or are saying. That they write merely for the market seems to me to be untrue. You cannot divide the world into noble poets and dishonest novelists. It may do on paper, but in fact it is an impossible thought. I wish I knew a thoroughly bad man. I wish I knew any man who was consistent, who would stay still while I did something more than guess at the truth about his personality. I would then anatomize him, and present him to our poet-critics as an effigy to be publicly flayed and destroyed.

SIMON PURE

SONGS OF LIGHT

By Pascal D'Angelo

1

THE wind strikes the pyramids of silence
And they fall into fragments of glistening melody,
And drift beyond the forests and hills
Into sudden distant pyramids of gold.

The wind serpents around their glimmering pinnacles of silence,
And whirls off into outer blue,
And perhaps goes ruffling and panting
To where the loose-tressed maidens of space
Are floating on the winds of centuries.

2

THE sun robed with noons stands on the pulpit of heaven,
Like an anchorite preaching his faith of light to listening space.

And I am one of the sun's lost words,
A ray that pierces through endless emptiness on emptiness,
Seeking in vain to be freed of its burden of splendor.

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GEORG BRANDES

(This article accompanies the first of a series of portrait studies of famous living European authors by Ivan Opffer, the American artist, now in Copenhagen.)

IT was Goethe who coined the word *Weltliteratur*, or world literature, and justified the existence of the expression by his own writings. It is Georg Brandes more than any other one man who has approached the study of literature from the world point of view. He is the greatest synthetic critic now living. Born at Copenhagen, February 4, 1842, he began his career, 1865, as a writer by a series of studies on Danish authors of whom Hans Christian Andersen is the most widely known. His first real book, on Hippolyte Taine, appeared in 1870. On November 3, 1871, he delivered at the University of Copenhagen the first lecture in a course that was afterward to be expanded and published, in six volumes, under the collective title of "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature". It remains to this day the work by which Brandes is best known among those who frequent circulating libraries. The chief characters treated in it are Kleist, Châteaubriand, De Maistre, Byron, Shelley, Musset, Hugo, Balzac, Heine, and Feuerbach.

Of others on whom he has written books—the first books indeed that were written on them—Lassalle, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Max Klinger stand out. Brandes was the first to interpret Ibsen, just as he was the real and undisputed discoverer of Friedrich Nietzsche. The last letter Nietzsche wrote before his mental collapse was addressed to him. He has traveled widely, lectured in the principal cities of the world, and written no end of pamphlets, while his autobiography in many volumes and not yet complete is virtually a history of æsthetics since 1860.

Then there are his *magna opera:* "William Shakespeare" (1912), "Wolfgang Goethe" (1916), "François de Voltaire" (1917), "Julius Cæsar" (1919), "Michelangelo" (1921), each in two great volumes, documented, illustrated, informative, provocative, liberal always but radical never, though a half century ago exactly Brandes was asked to leave his country because his teachings were regarded as likely to undermine Danish society. The truth is, Danish society today rests largely on the foundation Brandes laid for it. And November last Denmark acknowledged this fact, publicly, officially, and fully.

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD

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Georg Brandes

Drawn from life
for THE BOOKMAN
by Ivan Opffer

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BROADWAY, OUR LITERARY SIGNPOST

By Kenneth Andrews

SOME time ago we saw a movie with a most deceptive title. We have forgotten what the title was, but there was no suggestion in it that the picture was what is known as "western", or we should certainly not have seen it. It began in front of the same old saloon on the same old company street. The same old grocery store and post office were set up in their usual places; in the distance were the same old mountains. The conventional farm hands, smoking the well-known Bull Durham cigarettes, loafed about the swinging door of the saloon; the tidy little mustangs or burros stood patiently swishing their tails, waiting to make their customary dash up the street and out of range of the camera. We swore fervently under our breath and reached for our hat, overcoat, rubbers, brief case, and umbrella.

But a caption on the screen caught our eye. It said something to the effect that the old west was no more, that cowboys were not what they had once been, that they were now mostly a myth. We paused. Cowboys no longer wore chaps and loosely knotted bandannas, we read. The average herder of cattle, in this effete present, would consider a loaded .48 in his belt a great responsibility, would not be able to hit anything with it if he did carry it, which he did not. We scarcely credited our eyes, but there it was in black and white. Here indeed was enlightenment, progress. A deception which had been lucratively practised for years was exposed, and by the movie magnates themselves. How extraordinary that we should, by chance, stumble upon this epoch-marking film which would no doubt sound the death knell of the two-gun man, and thus rid the casual movie goer, like ourself, of one of our gravest afflictions.

The star of the picture, a big heman, for the first time permitted his admirers to see him in civilian clothes. He looked lumpy and surprisingly mature and ill at ease, his hands kept getting in his way and the stiff collar about his swarthy, muscular neck bothered him considerably. We were full of admiration for him; here surely was a sacrifice on the altar of artistic truth. The picture went on and we learned that a young lady from the east was coming on the next train and that she would expect all the old glitter and trappings of the west as she had learned to know them through the movies. It would be unmanly—unwestern—to disappoint her. The boys must get together and give her all the adventure and wild west stuff she was coming for. So they all dressed up in the same old costumes. The star got into his patent leather gauntlets, his spurs, his wide sombrero—and he was himself again. The story that followed was the old story. There was gun play, drinking of straight redeye, the chase over hill and dale, and the fist fight. It was the same old hokum; by the end of the picture the actors on the screen, and the audience in the theatre, had forgotten all about the disclosures at the beginning, which

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had been made merely to salve the conscience of the producers, and to offer an alibi enabling the more intelligent of the spectators to revel shamelessly in the pictorial dime novel which they had really come to see. It was a memorable and confusing spectacle.

And something of this kind seems to be happening on the stage—or perhaps we should say the "speaking stage". An immaculate New York audience does not like to concede that it is thrilled by the scene where the leading lady is tied to the rails three minutes before the night express is due; but that scene, variously modified, has been the basis of a dozen big Broadway successes of the last few years. We need only recall "Seven Keys to Baldpate" or "The Bad Man" or "The Tavern" or "The Bat". In spite of the gesture of sophistication with which those tales are told, they are, in reality, the same old stuff. The qualities which really give them life are derived straight from the Beautiful Cloak Model school.

However, as the process of insulating the old blood and thunder and adapting it to modern needs has been developed, quite noteworthy results—and quite surprising ones—have been attained. We have what amounts to a new type of play. It is a play where effort is made not to create illusion, but to destroy it. The spectator is constantly reminded that it is all foolishness, he is constantly being urged not to believe a thing he sees. But in spite of these admonitions he insists on getting excited when the hero is trapped in the opium den and the spark is creeping along the time fuse on the infernal machine. He is excited and amused at the same time, a peculiar and novel situation which he does not understand, but which he finds pleasant. This may account for the great success of the plays just mentioned, and of the others like them. They provide a distinctly new sensation.

If we were asked to draw a moral from this, we would say that this new type of play—and it is certainly a mongrel type—may not be a bad thing at all. In enjoying such a play we bring into the theatre, in spite of ourselves, a detachment of viewpoint that is quite unusual. We have a totally different sort of reaction to such a play. The craftsmanship, the devices on which it turns, are emphasized. We are able, in other words, to find amusement in the play as an exercise of artistic dexterity, not solely as a fairy tale which, to impress, must fool us. It is in such an atmosphere, and only in such an atmosphere, that the playwright can do his honest best.

The most successful experiment in this new medium yet to be revealed is, we think, "Bulldog Drummond", which came to New York after a distinguished and extremely prosperous career in London. During the first few scenes there is not the slightest suggestion that the big scene of the play is to find the hero lashed to a chair by means of a strait jacket, while the heroine, unconscious as a result of the torture that she has just undergone, sits at the left, a sinister red mark on her wrist indicating the fiendish nature of her recent agony. When the play opens we are in Captain Drummond's flat on Half Moon Street. His flat resembles the trophy room of a country club, and the jolly young chaps who sit about in their tweed knickers and spoof one another do not suggest that there is impending the ringing curtain line: "Get Bulldog Drummond dead or alive!" There is, as the play gets under way, much

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old-dearing and old-beaning, much tossing off of brandy and soda, though it is morning.

Captain Drummond, we learn, did the usual thing in No Man's Land, getting his machine gun nest and his V. C. early in the proceedings. Since the armistice he has found peace irksome to his active nature and has at length inserted an advertisement in the agony column of the "Times", touching upon his war record and stating that he is looking for adventure. A lady in blue sees his ad and presents herself at the flat. And still we are just jollying along the way young toffs do on an idle morning in London. But the lady in blue tells a harrowing tale about a mysterious house where a forlorn creature is held prisoner by a band of thugs. Her own uncle is in their power and it is fast making an old man of him. Will Captain Drummond help her? Cheer-o! Rath-er! And we're off. We're off, and we go far. Far be it from this bewildered reviewer to recall all that happens thereafter. There is, we believe, no moment when someone is not in danger of some particularly horrible death. But the touch of light comedy with which the play opens is never lost; that is the important thing. The three young dogs are perfect clubmen, even when the house is surrounded, and they are presumably lost. Here—as in the case of the western movie—we find a memorable and confusing, but a thoroughly enjoyable spectacle.

"Captain Applejack" by Walter Hackett, also very English, is in its general spirit quite similar to "Bulldog Drummond". Here, too, we have crooks and guns, and the narrowest possible escapes from death. But the blend of light comedy and this-is-my-woman melodrama is achieved in a different—and a less ingenious—way. Ambrose Applejohn, however, is, like Captain Drummond, thirsting for adventure. He wants to rescue a beautiful woman, a princess if possible, from danger. He has the blood of a long line of pirates in his veins, and the placid routine of his excessively well ordered country place has at last got on the old nerves. Into the silent house comes an adventuress at the unearthly hour of ten o'clock. She is being pursued by Ivan Borolsky, the most devilish of all the agents of Soviet Russia. She begs succor and a haven. Ambrose is abashed and embarrassed, but when someone knocks on the outer door (apparently with a hammer) he tells her to go "in there", and the duel with death and destruction is on. There is a treasure, so the crooks believe, concealed in the old house, and the secret of its hiding place is to be found written on parchment in a secret panel of the very room we are in.

In the dead of night, with the return of the crooks expected at any moment, Ambrose and his ward study the parchment which they themselves have found. And Ambrose falls asleep. The next act is his dream, and it is a swashbuckling act aboard Captain Applejack's pirate lugger. There is a woman over whom the captain and his mate come to blows, there is a mutiny, and a card game with a life at stake. The old stuff again. Again we were reminded of the movie. And the audience at the Cort reacted much as the movie audience did. It was the Treasure Island complex, not the burlesque, that got them. The play has the double appeal of melodrama and burlesque, and that is a curiously fetching appeal. "Captain Applejack" and "Bulldog Drummond" both have

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it, but the latter play affords the more significant example. We are aware of the burlesque in "Captain Applejack", we know it is a dream we are seeing. In "Bulldog Drummond" the melodrama really registers as such, and the comedy also registers as such, which is very different. Both plays are extremely successful tours de force.

It has generally been such a boisterous month in the theatre that the peace to be found at "The S. S. Tenacity" comes as something of a shock. This simply conceived and delicately wrought little comedy from the French of Charles Vildrac seems quite demure among the noisy pieces which surround it. The story takes place in a placid little restaurant in a town on the coast of France. Bastien and Segard, two ex-poilus from Paris, come to the port to take the S. S. "Tenacity" for Canada. But the "Tenacity" is laid up for repairs for a week, and the two friends are forced to wait in the inn. Both take a fancy to Thérèse, the pretty housemaid of the place. Segard, the gentler of the two, dreams of a cottage with vines over it and Thérèse inside doing fancy work. Bastien plies Thérèse with champagne, and one early morning they take the train together for somewhere. Segard, left behind, is brokenhearted, but he starts off for Canada alone. This uneventful story is told with the utmost simplicity. Nothing is stressed, no moral is pointed; yet it is one of the most moving plays of the season we think. Three lives are changed forever as the quiet scenes unfold, and merely because the boiler of a tramp steamship sprang a leak. It is edged delicately with irony, also, since Segard, the dreamer, who had been persuaded by the more volatile Bastien to undertake the adventure in the new world, is, after all, the one who really goes out alone in search of his fortune.

"The Dover Road" from the pen of the fecund A. A. Milne seems to us to accomplish what Mr. Milne has been trying to accomplish, by various means, for years. Milne undeniably has the gift for light comedy, but, even in light comedy, at least on this side of the Atlantic ocean, there must be something more than finely spun phrases. There is in "The Dover Road" a genuine light comedy idea as well as light comedy people and light comedy lines. Latimer (most unctuously played by Charles Cherry) has a house "just off the Dover Road" and, by various ruses, intercepts eloping couples and keeps them as his guests for a week. He gives to the man involved a particularly draughty room on the theory that no woman should marry a man until she has seen him with a cold in the head. He has, as the result of long experience in his unusual avocation, numerous other devices which he applies as circumstances warrant. Sometimes the couples go on to Dover, sometimes they return to London. He is neutral, feeling that his duty is done when his system has been conscientiously exercised. It is an amusing tale as Milne tells it, the most entertaining of his plays yet to be imported; it seems to us considerably more of an evening than "Mr. Pim".

The Theatre Guild's production of Andreyev's "He Who Gets Slapped" provides an experience that is distinctly novel, quite unique. It is the impossible dream of a thousand drama uplifters come true. It accomplishes what the intense little theatre groups and collegiate dilettantes have proved over and over again cannot be accom-

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plished. It takes a play which is, in essence, an ornate dramatic poem and makes it enormously effective on the stage. We mean that it is a dramatic poem in the sense that it is more a symphony in words than a coherent theatrical narrative. Its appeal is the appeal of orchestral music. There is of course a story. A stranger who is never identified comes into the unreal little world of the circus from "out there" and begs that he may become a clown. Pressed to devise a stunt he says that he will be known as He, the one who gets slapped. He falls in love with the bareback rider and poisons her and himself when her father seeks to marry her off for money. But this story runs through the play only as a subdued and fitful melody. The scenes, vivid enough in themselves, seem curiously to suggest rather than state. The appeal of the play lies in the vagaries of the moods, mostly fanciful and indeterminate, which the florid lines may create, not in this capricious and illogical tale. It is astonishing that the Theatre Guild is so successful with it. The piece is well acted, sumptuously mounted, and brilliantly directed, but this does not entirely account for its success as a practical theatrical venture. Naturally the production might have all of those qualities and still fail. The truth is that the Theatre Guild, possibly without quite knowing how they did it, have managed to reveal with a peculiar aptness the strange emotional fervor which lies deep down in the play—which warmed the author as he wrote it. There are few rules which could guide a producer or an actor in this delicate task. It is not a question of emphasis, or grouping or reading. It is more a question of a rare group sensitiveness—and luck. It is like burnishing a precious stone, stopping by chance midway in the process, and realizing that another stroke would have irreparably destroyed the lustre. Giving the Guild all credit, we have the feeling that this exceptional production is in the nature of a fortunate accident. Which is perhaps unfair to Richard Bennett and Margalo Gillmore, who play their difficult rôles with thorough comprehension. It is pleasant to see Miss Gillmore at last in a part which fits her; and the same may be said of Louis Calvert who at last has a chance, once more, to exercise his mellow talents.

"The Married Woman" by C. B. Fernald is little more than an obligato for Norman Trevor's suave and resonant eloquence. Leo Ditrichstein, in "Face Value", wearing as red a wig as has ever been seen on Broadway outside of the Columbia, gives some odd moments from "The Great Lover", "The Phantom Rival", and other of his past successes. Our chief impression of "The Squaw Man" was that William Faversham, as the runaway Englishman who marries a dumb wife, shows his age less than the play. "The Blue Kitten" is a sprightly and tuneful anecdote about the Paris equivalent of a head waiter with a Dutch accent and a place in the country. Joseph Cawthorn is getting to look more like Raymond Hitchcock every day, and Lillian Lorraine's back is as dazzling as ever. Elsie Janis and her gang remind us of what we put up with during the war. The show, with its home brew humor and general shoddiness, somehow suggests "The American Legion Weekly", or an ex-doughboy out of work.

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QUAI DE LA TOURELLE

By John Dos Passos

I

IN the dark the river spins,
Laughs and ripples never ceasing,
Swells to gurgle under arches,
Swishes past the bows of barges,
In its haste to swirl away
From the stone walls of the city
That has lamps that weight the eddies
Down with snaky silver glitter,
As it flies it calls me with it
Through the meadows to the sea.

I close the door on it, draw the bolts,
Climb the stairs to my silent room;
But through the window that swings open
Comes again its shuttle-song,
Spinning love and night and madness,
Madness of the spring at sea.

II

THE streets are full of lilacs,
Lilacs in boys' buttonholes,
Lilacs at women's waists;
Arms full of lilacs, people trail behind them through the moist night
Long swirls of fragrance,
Fragrance of gardens,
Fragrance of hedgerows where they have wandered
All the May day,
Where the lovers have held each other's hands
And lavished vermillion kisses
Under the portent of the swaying plumes
Of the funereal lilacs.

The street are full of lilacs
That trail long swirls and eddies of fragrance,
Arabesques of fragrance,
Like the arabesques that form and fade,
In the fleeting ripples of the jade-green river.

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THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

Two Novels of Country Life

SAYS a snippy young society girl by name Juanita on pages 280-1 of "Lost Valley" (Harper):

"I know you want to be rid of me, and I won't stay for tea. But you can't be so merciless as not to tell Desmond and me about this. The idiot on the easel; that handsome country girl and the old Italian hag; Mulberry Street; Chinese jade! It's a movie, Arthur, and we long since agreed we had no right to keep our movies from our friends. Be a good boy, do!" She had lighted a cigarette and now spoke more slowly. "If there were anything private in it, I wouldn't ask. But there can't be, in this. And life *is* so dull. I'll go in ten minutes, if you'll tell me."

Can it be that Katharine Fullerton Gerould is deriding her own first performance in the rôle of novelist? Well, there is a certain amount of truth in Juanita's flippancy; for this curiously jumbled tale will doubtless be seen on the screen. In spite of a mechanical plot and much forced injection of sweetness and light, this story of Madge Lockerby of Lost Valley, while undistinguished, is interesting. Interesting to me, particularly, in plunging me into an attempt to understand just what it is that Mrs. Gerould is trying to do. Surely she does not pretend that this is a serious study of the hill people as we who have lived among them know them. Her picture of farm life is far gloomier than Mr. Lewis's portrait of Main Street. There are fine moments of morbidity in the early chapters. But, alas! separated from gloom, Mrs. Gerould seems unfailingly to become either melodramatic or sentimental. Assiduously enough, this critic of the younger generation seems to have borrowed many of both its virtues and its faults. When she remains a realist, she is excellent. When she attempts a picture of city youths under romantic circumstances, she seems to me either not to know them, or to choose to draw them as they are not.

What a contrast to this is Herbert Quick's fine, strongly-moving autobiographical historical novel of colonization in the middle west! In a sense, "Vandemark's Folly" (Bobbs-Merrill) is old-fashioned. It reminded me, somehow, of a Dumas transplanted to Iowa. Exciting at moments, filled with obvious faults of narration, it yet has a quality of the soil that is unmistakable. Occasionally, as in the story of the wedding of the plow and the sod, Mr. Quick writes poetry. He might have been a Hamsun; but as yet he is only a blundering Hamsun. Jake Vandemark, however, is a character worth remembering.

Mr. Nathan's Credo

IT is a dangerous business, this enunciation of the principles of a trade by one of its members. George Jean Nathan, however, is not a critic who hesitates to hazard any danger into which the use of an easily flowing fountain pen may lead. "The Critic and the Drama" (Knopf) seems to me a far poorer study of criticism than Mr. Nathan is himself a critic. It is, nevertheless, a book that interest in the theatre prompts one to read, and to read thoroughly. It is filled with bright sayings, so to say:

Contagious criticism is merely a vainglorious critic's essay at popularity: facts heated up to a degree where they melt into caressing nothingness....Art and the artist are ever youthful lovers; criticism is their chaperon....Great drama, like great men and great women, is al-

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ways just a little sad. Only idiots may be completely happy....Criticism is personal, or it is nothing, talk to me of impersonal criticism, and I'll talk to you of impersonal sitz-bathing.

Mr. Nathan has an uncommon faculty of expressing commonplace truths in a spurt of brilliant wording. There is little that is new in the discussion of dramatic criticism; but it is set down with a certain passion for impudence. It is obvious that he says the things that many think, but it is also obvious that few say them, and when they do, they do not say them so well as does Mr. Nathan.

A New J. S. Fletcher

MYSTERY, character, love, a setting that combines the romance of the theatrical profession with the oddity of a quaint village on the Scottish border: satisfying ingredients for a detective yarn. "Scarhaven Keep" (Knopf) is, I think, J. S. Fletcher's best. There seems to be no writer of this type of fiction who is able to keep so well his sense of plot and of characterization. If you like detective stories, here is one that I can recommend with vigor. It is well written, too. Think of it!

An American Colossus

TO many persons, the quiet figure of Robert E. Lee has always given the tragic pages of Civil War history a saving benediction. For us, then, "General Robert E. Lee After Appomattox" (Macmillan). "This memorial volume, issued fifty years after the termination of the incomparable services of General Robert Edward Lee as president of Washington College", is another chance to learn of the rare nobility of this rare and noble man. It is a collection of papers edited by Franklin L. Riley, professor of history at the university. Some of them are simple reminiscences of men who were college boys under the Confederate general's administration. Bold, simple, plainly written documents, most of them, but from this hodgepodge of essays rises a picture that is unforgetable.

Native Rhymes and Rhythms

HERE is a volume filled with delightful morsels.

I had a liddle rooster,
He crowed befo' day.
'Long come a big owl,
An' toted him away.

But de rooster fight hard,
An' de owl let him go.
Now all de pretty hens
Wants dat rooster fer deir beau.

Nor is it only a book from which numerous verses, amusing, sad, tragic, may be quoted. "Negro Folk Rhymes" (Macmillan) contains a study by Thomas W. Talley of Fisk University of the origin and development of these odd folk ditties. I have a theory that if all those gentlemen and ladies who spend so much time discussing so-called "free verse" would spend the same amount of energy in studying the origins of rhythm, they would discover some astonishing facts that are not to be found in most books on versification. Here are "dance poems" written instead of music for the negro clogs. Here are "calls" sounded across the cotton fields, with rhythms so subtle and delicate that they woo the ear as few American strains do, unless they be those of Carl Sandburg. Sandburg has learned much, whether consciously or unconsciously, from the negro. This study seems to me to be a most valuable contribution to the history of rhythm, as well as a book of what should prove popular verse.

—*J. F.*

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A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

THROUGH RUSSIA IN A DRESS SUIT

By Floyd Dell

ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS is a curious and romantic figure. He is a preacher and a revolutionist—and incidentally, he is the man who went through the Bolshevik Revolution in a dress suit.

He looks like the hero of a Winston Churchill novel; he is tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, lazy-looking, a little unkempt, and has an ingratiating smile. That smile has kept him from being shot against a wall more times than he can remember in the past seven years.

Up to seven years ago, his life was comparatively quiet and quite respectable. He was born somewhere in New England, the son of a clergyman. He, too, decided to be a clergyman; he went to divinity school, graduated, and became the minister of one of Boston's oldest Congregational churches. Then the war came, and he thought he would like to be a war correspondent. He secured a leave of absence from his flock, obtained a correspondent's credentials from "The Outlook", and started for Belgium. He entered that unhappy country just after the fall of Liége; and from that time on his life was that of the hero of a romantic novel.

Armed with his "Outlook" credentials and his ingratiating smile, he wandered out into the path of the huge advancing German war machine. He was promptly arrested as a spy, and hastily ordered shot. He turned his ingratiating smile upon his captors, and argued the matter with them in a kindly Christian manner and in bad German. They changed their minds about shooting him; they let him go, and warned him to stay where he belonged. A real war correspondent, unlike the war correspondents of the story books, belonged at the rear. But Albert Rhys Williams hadn't come to Belgium for that. He escaped the watchful Hunnish eye, and was immediately back at the front again. He was again arrested, nearly shot, and packed off out of the way; and again he returned. Wherever the German army went, they found Albert Rhys Williams. He was behaving like a story book war correspondent, with just that mixture of heroism and romantic foolishness which endears our favorite characters of fiction to us. He must have been a terrible nuisance to the German army. But, in between the times he spent in prison waiting for dawn and the firing squad, he managed to go everywhere and see everything.

Then he came home, wrote a book about his experiences ("In the Claws of the German Eagle"), resigned from the ministry, and decided to go to Russia. It was after the first Russian Revolution. He thought there might be another revolution, and rather hoped there would be; but in case he had to dine with the old aristocracy, he brought along his evening clothes. On a Russian sleeping car all his other clothes were stolen; so he put on his evening clothes perforce, and wandered about Petrograd to see what he could see. The second revolution obligingly arrived on time. Al-

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bert Rhys Williams was in Smolny with Lenin and Trotzky the night the Kerensky government was overthrown and the Bolsheviks assumed power. On the same night another dramatic event took place—the capture of the Winter Palace: and Albert Rhys Williams was there, too. He, and four other Americans, John Reed, Louise Bryant, Bessie Beatty, and Alexander Gumberg, left Smolny and reached the Winter Palace just in time to see the mob start to loot it of its treasures—and in time to see them put the treasures back at the bidding of a handful of Bolshevik workingmen....A peasant soldier has a blanket. "Put it back!" "But it's cold in the barracks!" "I'm sorry you're cold, *tovarish!* But better for you to suffer cold than for the Revolution to suffer disgrace by your looting!" He puts it back....Astonishing Russians! They listen to arguments!

The White Guards, a day or so later, recapture the central telephone station. Albert Rhys Williams drops in to visit them. The Bolsheviks recapture it back again. The mob outside yells for the blood of the junkers, who have broken their parole in rising against the new proletarian government. Terror-stricken, they plead with the American to save them. He remembers that they have a prisoner, Antonov, commander of the Red Guard, awaiting execution at their hands. Williams goes to him, informs him of his change of fortune, and asks for their lives. Antonov promises. The mob presses in. Antonov blocks the way with a revolver, and—knowing the Russian temperament—bids the American make a speech! The American—in battered evening clothes—addresses the mob. His Russian is more than imperfect—it is, as yet, scarcely existent. *Tovarish* is the only word he knows. And so he begins: *"Tovarish!"*—and goes on in English; an eloquent speech, of which the mob understands not a word, but to which it *listens!* Its attention secured, Antonov speaks. "For the triumph of the Revolution you have been brave. Now, for the honor of the Revolution be merciful!" The mob becomes a Soviet. More speeches are made. A formal vote is taken. Astonishing Russians! The ballot is in favor of mercy—the prisoners' lives are spared—and Albert Rhys Williams goes on to the next place where something exciting is happening.

Meanwhile, his Russian was improving. Presently he was making speeches in Russian before Bolshevik assemblies. He became acquainted with Lenin and Trotzky. When the Germans commenced their drive on Petrograd, he joined the Red Guard, and at Lenin's suggestion organized the International Legion of the Red Army. This is from the call, printed in five languages in the Bolshevik press, written by our former Boston clergyman: "Russia needs not your words and pious wishes. She needs work, discipline, organization, and *guns in the hands of fearless fighters.*"

The ex-Rev. Mr. Albert Rhys Williams went to rifle practice, along with his fellow-légionnaires—still wearing his dress suit, now much begrimed. "We were a motley crowd", he tells us in his new book, "and our fighting strength really amounted to little. But the spirit of it had a good moral effect upon the Russians. It gave them the feeling that they were not utterly alone." More effective than this was the propaganda work upon which he was engaged with John Reed, who now lies buried under the walls of the Kremlin—the pictures, papers, and leaflets showered into the German

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trenches, preaching revolt to the German soldiers.

All this is in his new book; he was already the author of a book of reminiscences of Lenin, and a list of "76 Questions and Answers" about Soviet Russia. This new book is a picture-book story book of the Russian Revolution. The pictures are a remarkable set of Bolshevik posters, reproduced in the original colors—posters against everything from counter-revolutionary generals to the typhus louse. The story is the sort of tale that only such a man, with such a romantic faculty for always being in the way of exciting events, could tell. In these days when even the Russian Revolution is becoming sober and prosy, he revives for us the flower of its early blooming.

Mr. Williams went across Siberia to Vladivostok, and was there when the soviets were overthrown by an international coup d'état. Known as one of the friends of the Bolsheviks, a man with a price on his head, Williams was arrested again and again. Apparently he smiled at his White Guard captors, and treated them to some kindly Christian argument, for they always let him go. He stayed long enough to see the "Red Funeral", and he has written of it in one of the most poignant and beautiful chapters of modern prose.

He escaped from Vladivostok and reached San Francisco, where he was held up by the authorities and duly questioned.

"Now, you are a Socialist," said one of his inquisitors. "What other beliefs do you hold?"

"Altruism, optimism, and pragmatism," he told them; and he comments: "More strange and dangerous Russian doctrines being imported into America!"

It wouldn't have been any use, anyway, trying to keep out Albert Rhys Williams and his altruism-optimism-pragmatism, his Socialist romance, his kindly Christian argument, his pleasant smile, and his faded dress suit. They go wherever they like, and nothing can stop them!

Through the Russian Revolution. By Albert Rhys Williams. Boni and Liveright.

THE COMFORTS OF EXPLORING

By Will H. Solle

AS the "armchair explorer" discovers the new north described by Stefansson, he has to sit tight and restrain his impulsive desires to visit the Arctic and learn of its friendliness for himself. After the first disheartening chapters that rob the imagination of the old stock ideas of glamourous perils, the reader longs to go out and build himself a snowhouse, hunt seals and caribou, avoid the dense swarms of mosquitoes, or tramp over the prairies covered with wild flowers and teeming with insect life. The imagination, in giving up the old conception of heroic adventure, substitutes visions of glorious hunting trips, unique holidays in the open, and release from the tyranny of civilization with its complex menus, its nerve-racking mechanical conveniences, and its formalities. The heroics, however, that Stefansson seems to have removed from arctic exploration, are replaced with records of fortitude and achievement under handicaps that will always characterize life in the Far North.

After living many years with the Eskimos and taking part in several arctic explorations, Stefansson became convinced that earlier explorers had gone forward with mistaken theories,

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or at least with theories that retarded their progress and weakened their usefulness. Instead of conveying provisions sufficient to reach a given point and return, why not make a living from the natural resources of the country? Why not kill seals, or bears, as one went along and use them for food, fuel, and clothing? Why not adopt Eskimo habits of dress and revive the old-time Eskimo snowhouse? The Eskimos as well as the white men believed the arctic ice fields and islands to be barren, they laughed at the idea of conducting an exploratory trip into the Far North depending for its success upon hunting. Now, of course, the world knows that it can be done; but when Stefansson set out on his first trip in 1913 and disappeared on an ice floe the first night, the newspapers reported his death and the failure of his theories. A year later he appeared on schedule at the place where he had designated a party under his command to meet him. He was very much alive, well fed, well clothed, and in abounding health, when he walked into the camp on Banks Island. For four succeeding winters he pursued the same policy of living from the land, and his explorations, unimpeded by enormous caravans of supplies, discovered new lands, surveyed old lands, and studied the islands visited. The scientific results of these studies are to appear in twenty-odd volumes, while the romance of the expedition appears in this fascinating volume of the Friendly Arctic. According to Stefansson, "it is chiefly our unwillingness to change our minds which prevents the north from changing into a country to be used and lived in just like the rest of the world".

The narrator of these exhilarating experiences and the commander of the expedition is more modest than the customary writer of travel books. Among the scores of illustrations his picture never appears. In the records of discoveries and journeys into unknown regions his companions are given full credit for their share in the work. Even in the various accounts of insubordination that might easily have ruined the work undertaken, Stefansson does no more than state the facts and leaves inferences or judgments to the reader. Yet despite his modesty, his personality stands out as the central figure in an adventure that has revolutionized the methods of arctic exploration, and robbed romanticists (whether in literature or the movies) of many stock accessories for thrilling their audiences.

The Friendly Arctic. By Vilhjalmur Stefansson. The Macmillan Co.

BLUBBER AND MYSTICISM

By William McFee

THE recent movement, on both sides of the Atlantic, making for a revived interest in Herman Melville, has at length culminated in this very complete biography and critical estimate. To the middle-aged Englishman, however, it is only fair to say that this sudden and overwhelming enthusiasm is somewhat bewildering. It is claimed that Melville has been "neglected" in the United States, which may be true. But the present writer can assert from his own knowledge that "Typee", "Omoo", and "Moby Dick" have been on sale in England at twenty-five cents a volume for a good part of his lifetime. Before the war the cheap editions of the classics nearly always included Melville's books, along with such works as White's "Selborne",

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Thoreau's "Walden", and Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister". And the only way of accounting for the "neglect" of Melville in America is that he is dead, and the American system of book publishing and distribution does not make for immortality.

Mr. Weaver has done the thing for once and all. Here we have everything that anyone can conceivably desire to know of Melville. It is a question not yet answered to the present writer's satisfaction, whether he is any happier now than before reading it. Melville had not a personality like Stevenson's or, let us say, Jack London's. The lives of these men were as interesting as their books. This is not depreciating Melville. It was simply a difference, not of quality, but of type. Melville was a member of that class of writers who, if destiny furnishes a sufficiency of pecuniary reward, sink back into a pleasant and dignified obscurity, letting the world go by. In England he would have secured a Civil List pension and ended his days in peace as a still living classic. But this pecuniary reward did not come to him. He did not arrive at what he calls "unobstructed leisure" until he was about to die.

Care must be taken just now lest the enthusiasm engendered by the first reading of Melville's great book "Moby Dick" hurry us into faulty judgments. He will ever remain a magnificent torso. What he did and what he might have done, with his gifts, are two very different things. He was betrayed into an unreasonable exasperation with humanity and no man can do humanity or himself justice in such a condition of mind. Only once did he achieve what can be called a masterpiece. In "Moby Dick" he can be compared with no one, at times, save Shakespeare, in his supreme mastery of character drawing. In that book he clears the ground and goes soaring on giant pinions. Let the incredulous read again the scenes at the Try Pots Inn, and compare Mrs. Hussey with Dame Quickly. Let them read again the scenes in the forecastle at midnight. Here we are on enchanted territory, beyond the reach of literary rules and conventions, floating in a magic ocean. We close the book and whisper, "Oh what might he not have done?" And there is no answer. The story of Melville's life is simply a confirmation of the tragic fact, that only once did he wrench himself free from the corporeal encumbrances which held him down. It was his misfortune to imagine that he was unkindly used by fate, when he was only encountering the usual and inevitable agonies of the artist when his own personality is the raw material of his art.

Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic. By Raymond M. Weaver. George H. Doran Company.

FORETELLING THE THEATRE'S FUTURE

By Oliver M. Sayler

ART, like artists, is usually in greater peril from its friends than from its enemies, and never more so than when it is all dressed up and bound for uncharted playgrounds. The abject adoration of every canvas that looks as well upside down as it does inside out has done more to obscure the sound contributions of the futurists and the cubists than all the vetoes of the Academies. What the critical gentlemen have been pleased to call the New Movement in the Theatre—for want of a term connoting its old and perpetual nature as well as its

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new—is particularly fortunate, therefore, to find an appraiser and an apologist who, in the person of Kenneth Macgowan, keeps his head on his shoulders and his tongue well anchored within his head.

It may be because I know him so well—his faults as well as his talents—but this, his first book, seems to me nothing short of remarkable for its detached, impersonal, and comprehensive character. The author of "The Theatre of Tomorrow" isn't the Macgowan who sits in crisp and hasty nightcourt judgment on passing plays for the "Globe", though his book has the apt, concrete phraseology of the best of his daily critiques. Nor is it the more penetrating and loquacious Macgowan of "Vogue", nor yet the austere and priestly editor of "The Theatre Arts Magazine", though the volume combines fulness of treatment with fitting authority.

Instead, it seems to me that here is the real K. M., the K. M. whom his friends conjure up when someone complains of his other embodiments, the K. M. who analyzes the latest "ism" or interviews the latest "ist" over the soup at the Harvard Club, the K. M. who, as offhand as a surgeon, dissects the profoundest problems of the theatre while he puts together a Chinese puzzle. Unlike some staff contributors who have achieved self-determination between cloth covers and yet have clung to their old inhibitions, he appears to have realized to the full the freedom underlying the old adage, "Ye shall write a book and your book shall make you free."

Now, this question of freedom with Macgowan, I am sure, is no issue of honesty or tact or policy in expressing his opinions. It is simply that he is writing for himself and not for the more or less vaguely personified audience of a newspaper or magazine. Authors sometimes dramatize and personify their audience, too, but not authors of first books. A first book is as engrossing as a hootch party, with the reading of proof and the making of the index corresponding to the morning after, and if you don't believe it, try it! And it is due in part to that exhilaration as well as to a practical idealism that Macgowan is such a complacent and unconcerned apologist for the new theatre. He doesn't see the need of fighting for it; he just predicts it. It's coming, anyhow, and that's that!

Admittedly a sequel to Hiram Kelly Moderwell's "The Theatre of Today"—and an invaluable sequel, for the theatre, despite the war, has moved far since 1914—Macgowan's survey is really written in the three tenses of research, observation, and speculation. Nothing is likely soon to take its place on reference shelves for resume and appraisal of the past. Anyone who desires sound and not too technical analysis of the present will be compelled to turn to it. And while the future of anything in these fluid times is discouragingly difficult to predict, the volume fully justifies its title in its penetrating foreview along probable paths. It would be a more valuable, vivid, and incontrovertible work in its present and future tenses if its author had had opportunity to check up on his European observations of a decade ago and his reading of contemporary signs from afar by personal contact with those signs. But if every author were to wait until he knew everything possible to know about his subject, nine-tenths of the printers, booksellers, and public libraries would have to go out of business and we'd still be reading Aristotle and Lessing in a futile attempt to understand Reinhardt

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and Arthur Hopkins and Robert Edmond Jones, while the Expressionists would be as incomprehensible as Einstein and the virtues of the Eighteenth Amendment.

The Theatre of Tomorrow. By Kenneth Macgowan. Boni and Liveright.

VERLAINE WITHOUT TEARS

By Ernest Boyd

ALTHOUGH the publishers of Harold Nicholson's "Paul Verlaine" issued a book on the same subject by Wilfrid Thorley a few years ago, they have allowed the author of this volume to state on the first page that "there exists no Anglo-Saxon monograph on the life and works of Verlaine". It is, therefore, evident that neither he nor they are aware of his predecessor's existence—unless it be that they expect the public to forget Mr. Thorley's excellent little book, the work of a writer who is himself a poet, and a translator of French poetry whose skill in the rendering of Verlaine is unmatched. Mr. Nicholson, on the contrary, confesses that he had intended to include his versions of Verlaine's poems, but finally renounced what seemed to be a hopeless task. He is therefore extremely apologetic in presenting a subject which "has been worn threadbare", and he fears that "what has been done so adequately by Lepelletier and Delahaye" may be "a gratuitous undertaking". His oblivious publishers must clearly have brushed aside these scruples, since they have issued the book, ignoring their earlier affection for Mr. Thorley, and their reward has been to gather encomiums in the English press. But the question remains as to whether the public will take the hint and give to Mr. Nicholson what was meant for Wilfrid Thorley, credit for having written the first "Anglo-Saxon monograph" on Verlaine.

At the outset let it be said that the adjective is well chosen. This is a thoroughly Anglo-Saxon tome, wherein it differs somewhat from the English book of Mr. Thorley. Thus, by a subtlety, the accuracy of both author and publisher is secured for that claim to pioneering! This is the life of Verlaine as viewed by a respectable British taxpayer, who knows these foreigners are lewd and dirty fellows, but whose education has not been so neglected as to permit of a too impatient dismissal of wayward genius. Consequently, he is able to relate in a readable and informing manner the life of that thoroughly un-Anglo-Saxon poet, who has been called the modern Villon, and whose claim it is to have shared with Baudelaire the creation of modern French poetry. Mr. Nicholson has a sharp eye for the defects of Verlaine, whom he shows as an amiable, drunken weakling, and it is a cold, somewhat supercilious glance which rests from time to time upon the poet, as he emerges from prison, hospital, or from the gutter, after one of his innumerable escapades. One feels that such adventures are not dreamed of in the philosophy of the playing fields of Eton (where Waterloo was won!) and that the Anglo-Saxon monographer is only too conscious of the fact. However, he brings himself to give a patronizing smile and proceeds with the narrative.

Thus he is able to recount the amazing apparition of Rimbaud and to set out in some detail the story of his irruption into the life of Verlaine and into French literature, and his departure from both, as suddenly as he

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came, after ruining the one and enriching the other. Mr. Nicholson contrives to relate all this without once bringing a blush to the Anglo-Saxon cheek. He diverts the mind from reprehensible speculation by launching as soon as possible into a hymn of praise to Rimbaud, whom he asserts to be a greater genius than Verlaine. Here Mr. Nicholson betrays the weakness so common to critics who discuss a literature other than their own. He has obviously been misled by the latest stunt in certain Paris circles, where Rimbaud has become a part of the Claudel cult, since Claudel professed to owe his conversion to God to the influence of that writer. It would be hard to find anything more incredible, if not actually ludicrous, than this picture of the saturnine, demonic Rimbaud as the inspiration of the Claudelian stream of neo-Catholicism. But, since Claudel says so, it must be so, and as Claudel is the idol of the moment, it follows that the source which he acknowledges must be as great, or even greater than he. So Mr. Nicholson forsakes Verlaine during the space of a long chapter, to tell the fascinating story of Rimbaud, and to proclaim him great. That there were strange potentialities in the chaotic energy of "Le Bateau Ivre" has never been denied; that the author of "Les Illuminations" was a more powerful personality than Verlaine is certain, but this embryonic force cannot be compared to the perfection of achievement which marks the genius of Paul Verlaine.

Mr. Nicholson, continuing to be faithful to his Anglo-Saxon mission, inevitably reaches the point where he has to repeat the credo, formulated by Matthew Arnold, that French poetry is inferior to English. He does, at least, attempt to prove his case by the insertion of a technical disquisition upon metrics, but it is doubtful if any but the converted will be convinced. He is so determined to establish the charge that French poetry is monotonous that, when confronted with the evidence that Verlaine is not, he declares that the English ear can appreciate his music better than the French. This is a convenient method of meeting the problem which this controversy raises. If French poetry is monotonous and therefore inferior to English, why do the French themselves not think so? Answer: they do not hear it as it sounds to an Anglo-Saxon. But Verlaine is very varied and pleasing to the foreigner. Then, the French cannot properly appreciate him. Q. E. D. And so we obtain our "Anglo-Saxon monograph on the life and works of Paul Verlaine".

Paul Verlaine. By Harold Nicholson. Houghton Mifflin Co.

NATURE SECRETS

By Mary Graham Bonner

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON'S "Woodland Tales" are for all who love the world of out of doors. They describe those things that may be seen in the springtime and in the summer, in the autumn and in the winter, in the wonders of woodcraft, and in the thrilling, mysterious ways of Mother Carey.

We learn that "whenever a Brownie sits, a toadstool must spring up for him to sit on". And we discover that the flowers some of us have called the Dutchman's breeches are not rightly named. For at a certain swimming party the Brownies were driven out of the woods by a fire, leaving their

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breeches hanging up to dry. These breeches were untouched by the fire, and so on the first of every May we may go forth and see them still hanging up. Then we hear of the bargain between the flower and the bee whereby the pollen may be carried about to make other flowers grow, while the bee receives as his stipend the honey.

Perhaps we never thought of Father Time's eldest daughter as "very cold and distant", but surely now in the winter time we will often think of her in this way. In the autumn too we will remember the youngest daughter who was "a little extravagant, for she wore a new robe every day".

Mr. Seton tells many a nature secret, and those who are wise will want to harken.

Woodland Tales. By Ernest Thompson Seton. Doubleday, Page and Co.

WHAT OF OUR ESSAYISTS?

By Burton Rascoe

ROBERT BENCHLEY has had the happy idea to publish the American Declaration of Independence as a preface to his new book. Perhaps the idea only appealed to him as a clever one like his idea of dedicating his sensible nonsense to the inventor of Bessemer steel; but I prefer to assume that he is serious in a way which only humorists can afford to be. *"Ridiculum"*, wrote Horace, *"acri fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."**

Mr. Benchley had better suited my purpose, to be sure, had he inscribed his book to William Wrigley, to Henry Ford, or to the Messrs. Hart, Schaffner and Marx rather than to an English tinker now some years dead. Still, I take his preface to be a paradigm for a declaration of which we stand very much in need. For I hold these truths to be self-evident: that in the field of essay writing contemporary Americans are incomparably superior to the modern Englishmen; that our essayists hold their own with the essayists of all other countries; and that it is intimidated deference to assume the contrary. Our essays are rich and varied, from the delicious fooling of Robert Benchley to the graceful Tory erudition of Paul Elmer More; from the elfin malice of Clarence Day, Jr., to the inquisitive skepticism of F. M. Colby; from the romantic gusto of James Huneker to the lively satire of Simeon Strunsky; from the hearty lampoons of H. L. Mencken to the trenchant sarcasm of Stuart P. Sherman; from the perky perversities of Agnes Repplier to the incisive analysis of Albert Jay Nock. And this is to name but a few.

As a test of my contention I ask only that you read F. M. Colby's latest book and the latest book by Max Beerbohm. Mr. Beerbohm, I take it, is among the best that England has to offer, even if he has long since exiled himself to Rapallo. He has a delicate wit and a precious manner; he is a man of the world; and he is immensely clever. Of himself he has said accurately and with charming modesty that his endowments were slight and that he has been careful not to squander them. In his latest book there is evidence that his patrimony is running low; one sees him scraping here and scraping there. He is a gentleman, and he would not have you know that he has turned his linen and put cardboard in his shoes. His manner is as cultured as heretofore; he retains his jaunty air and his finesse;

*"You can razz a bird better by kidding him than you can by bawling him out."—*Trans. by Ring W. Lardner.*

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but this only serves to remind us that he was always a little bogus and that his snobbery is rather cheap.

Mr. Colby, on the other hand, is the reverse of a snob, though I should say that he has more reason to be one than Mr. Beerbohm. He is an authentic skeptic; he would put the interrogation point after every definite statement, after every pretense of authority, after every assumption of special revelation. And he does this, not in the will to destroy but in an effort to test, the validity of ideas. Superficial and hasty readers have listed him among the reactionaries and standpatters; but this is a grave mistake. No one is more receptive to new things, no one possesses a more eager and curious mind, no one makes a more courageous fight in behalf of the free play of ideas. I can no more account for the neglect of his two other volumes of wise and beautiful essays than I can account for the current misinterpretative mention of his work by the radicals. One may only assume that either they cannot read or that they are acutely conscious of the fragility of their notions. For he is continually saying, in effect, to the young:

> I who have been through the mill and who have got into the minds of these old fellows tell you to kick up your heels. Show us how you would do things; let us hear what you have to say. I reserve the right to question you and to poke a little fun at you if you entertain delusions of grandeur or begin to speak in an infallible tone. But this is no more than I do to the jellied old gentlemen with ready-made notions who are your enemy. An idea that cannot withstand the impact of a question is no good; you deceive yourselves by thinking that it is....

That is the attitude of this fine and temperate man who can speak with distrust of history with good grace because he is an historian; who can be validly skeptical of collegiate political economy because he has taught such subjects in a university; who can discount the claims of scholarship since he is a scholar; and who can view the sum of knowledge with an ironic smile because he is an encyclopædist. I regret that I have so little space, for I should like to expatiate upon the merit of this writer, whose style is so brightly polished and individual, whose wit is so nicely barbed and unerring, whose logic is so direct and refreshing, whose sanity, human sympathy, and common sense are so pleasurably revealed in his words.

Upon Clarence Day, Jr., too, I should like to dwell at length. He is an original with a keen sense of values, a satyric mockery, and a suave humor. Benchley is utterly gay and irresponsible, with a fantastic mind. Strunsky, who was poignantly human in "Belshazzar Court", now jests at current absurdities. The posthumous Huneker volume is below par for Huneker, but it contains some entertaining impressions nevertheless. Morley was crippled, I think, by his Oxford scholarship, but he is as good as most of the English light essayists he log-rolls so persistently.

The Margin of Hesitation. By Frank Moore Colby. Dodd, Mead and Co.
And Even Now. By Max Beerbohm. E. P. Dutton and Co.
The Crow's Nest. By Clarence Day, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf.
Of All Things. By Robert Benchley. Henry Holt and Co.
Sinbad and His Friends. By Simeon Strunsky. Henry Holt and Co.
Variations. By James Huneker. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Plum Pudding. By Christopher Morley. Doubleday, Page and Co.

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RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

MARIA CHAPDELAINE", a tale of the Lake St. John country, by Louis Hémon (Macmillan), is the sort of book that restores our faith in modern literature. It is a story of the French Canadian people, the pioneers of the present, who are slowly and painfully making farmland out of forests, a story especially about the Chapdelaine family in their little house in the woods, miles from any neighbor. They are rugged men and patient women, elemental in their emotions and childlike in their faith. The translation from the French preserves a poetic simplicity of style, something in the spirit of a Millet etching. It is one of the fine things of the year.

One need not be a regular subscriber at the Aquarium to enjoy "Tortoises" by D. H. Lawrence (Seltzer). The subject is not treated biologically but humanly, very humanly. In a half-dozen free verse lyrics, Mr. Lawrence philosophizes on the significance of this species, and to the misguided individuals who never before realized their importance, the volume will be a revelation. It is not hard to trace his analogies and the verses are replete with a subtle satire that is thoroughly enjoyable. By all means, consider the tortoise.

Because everything that John Drinkwater does is of interest, "Cotswold Characters" (Yale) cannot be overlooked. It is another of those slender little volumes—one teaspoonful of reading—that seem to be popular with the publishers lately. It contains five short but skilful character sketches, portraits of English country people of an ancient order quite unknown to us. It is clear and concise, kindly and humorous—an example of Drinkwater's best prose style.

Although A. P. Herbert is an Englishman, the title of his latest book, "Little Rays of Moonshine" (Knopf), will have a singular appeal to his American audience, and it quite fulfils the implied promise. He here presents a series of short humorous sketches, each one of which has enough kick in it to be pleasantly stimulating. It is English humor at its best, most of it from "Punch", and all of it apt to leave one in a thoroughly happy frame of mind.

The idolaters of Dickens have been given another complemental volume in B. W. Matz's "The Inns and Taverns of 'Pickwick'" (Scribner). Here is an illustrated collection of descriptive bits regarding those spots visited by the adventuring Pickwickians, in which Mr. Matz shows the buildings as they were and are and relates such anecdotes as have been connected with them since the days of the man who gave them fame.

Elizabeth Bibesco should regret that she will be known by many as the daughter of Margot Asquith, and by others as Princess Bibesco. She requires no support from her mother's reputation, and she has no need of the spurious fame accruing to a writing princess. "I Have Only Myself to Blame" (Doran) has individuality enough to stand by itself. This col-

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lection of short stories shows the writer's appreciation of the value of not ending the narrative. Each story is an episode, generally taken from a married life, which, while complete in itself, leaves to the reader the privilege—almost the necessity—of finishing the tale. They are exquisitely done things, sometimes perhaps too ostentatiously decorated with description, and occasionally lacking a nicety in the choice of words, but, for all that, excellent studies. They tantalize because they insist on continuing after the finis mark; they irritate because they are so short; but most of all they charm because they are so real.

Edgar Lee Masters devotes more than half of "The Open Sea" (Macmillan) to a psychological exploration into the mind of Lincoln's assassin to show that behind that murder there was the same decision which impelled Brutus to join in the killing of Cæsar. Almost a score of poems are devoted to this. Before now Masters has shown his admiration for Lincoln, and even here it manifests itself time and again. Because of this admiration, the cold scientific treatment of the historic incident brings a doubt as to the poet's sincerity. He seems to have a desire to surprise and shock. The same tendency is apparent in those verses which tell the other side of New Testament miracles—the business failure of the baker and fishmonger when the multitude was fed, is one of them. Delightful as these poems are, one feels that Masters did write them to jolt the orthodox. But about the "Monody on the Death of William Marion Reedy" there can be no doubt. In this there is sincere expression, such as has brought the worshipers to Masters's feet. The poet, for the most part, seems almost a stranger in this book, which may, after all, be but an indication of versatility.

After a rambling and confused introduction, Ernst von Wildenbruch does some remarkably fine work in "Envy" (Four Seas). It is not reminiscent of childhood, this story of the two little brothers, it is a recreation of it. The reader too feels the outside world dimly unimportant for the moment, and the intensity and passion, the love and cruelty of children to be the realities. The vividness of its style gives it an Ancient Mariner sort of fascination, and the translation from the German is so well done that one is not conscious of its being a translation at all.

The Bookfellows have published an anthology called "The Poet's Pack", which is meant to represent the best work of its members. The material was assembled by a contest to which more than a thousand poems were submitted. These were pruned down to one hundred and might easily have been made even less. There are few familiar names among the contributors but some promising work from new writers—perhaps a half-dozen poems altogether that make the collection worth while.

With a razored intellectual scalpel, Remy de Gourmont operates on modern thought to remove the growths which hamper clear reasoning. Convention—as a general term, not relating specifically to sex—is the matter through which the incision is made to reach the cancer. Nor, in "Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas", translated by William Aspenwall Bradley (Harcourt, Brace), is there any anæsthetic administered to lessen the pain. For this reason, the

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operation is apt to be serious, even dangerous, on those whose conventions are the thickest. But the treatment, painful though it may be, should prove efficacious for those with the temerity to allow the surgeon to cut.

"Simon Called Peter" by Robert Keable (Dutton) is the story of a smug and conventional minister who leaves England for the war and returns transformed by his experience with "publicans and sinners". In most respects the book is typical of the modern realistic school; it brooks no barriers in its endeavors after "frankness" and does not shudder at recounting the most unsavory and most unnecessary details of the life of its hero. The novel is interesting, although in places somewhat tedious; it presents for our inspection characters that are undoubtedly real, although by no means always agreeable; it is valuable chiefly as an authentic record of experiences in the war and as a testimony to the devastating moral effects of the conflict.

Marguerite E. Harrison's "Marooned in Moscow" (Doran) is an interesting, impartial, and exceedingly readable account of experiences in the Soviet Republic. Composed in a straightforward journalistic style, it gives one vivid glimpses of Russia as it is today; of the habits of the people and the workings of the government; of Russian methods of education, amusement, and punishment. The narrative is enlivened with numerous personal anecdotes that make it as entertaining as a piece of fiction. While Mrs. Harrison is by no means communistic in her leanings, she exhibits a tolerance that gives her book distinct value as a criticism of Bolshevism and Bolshevistic institutions.

In his essay on dancing, which prefaces "Poems of the Dance" (Knopf), Louis Untermeyer bewails the conventions which have compelled the metamorphosis of primitive abandon, and so creates an anticipatory delight for verses of unrepressed ages. Edward R. Dickson's anthology, however, is made up almost entirely of the expression of poets who knew nothing of the free bodies of days when neither flesh nor mind was bound in corset, and, to that extent, is disappointing. The sound of jungle music is not heard, nor are interpreting forms enraptured in tribal rites clearly or often seen. There is too much posturing; too little madness.

The quarrel between two great men is explained, if such a thing can be explained at all, in "The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence", edited by Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche (Boni and Liveright). The world looks for things constructive, and a quarrel being the reverse its exploitation is dull. But anything which lifts the veil to reveal the workings of master minds is interesting, and this the book in a measure accomplishes.

A haunting memory of O. Henry seems to persist through "Harlequin and Columbine" (Doubleday, Page)—a story written by Booth Tarkington about ten years ago, and now published in book form. Even a surprise ending is added to throw its weight with the atmospheric suggestion, making recognition of the many-sided Tarkington of 1922 more difficult. It is a delightful bit of a story of exaggerated types from a stage and a once-upon-a-time metropolitan boarding house, with just enough satire varnishing it here and there to keep it from being "sweet".

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All but one of Lionel Johnson's "Reviews and Critical Papers" (Dutton) were published in "The Academy" in the years 1891-5. The author died in 1902, not widely known, but respected by many literary persons of ability. It is not slighting to this book to say that it will add little or nothing to the author's considerable reputation; these are well written reviews, but not his best reviews. It was Johnson's practice in reviewing a book to give praise if that were possible, and then by analysis to discover wherein the composition before him fell short of perfection. No one was ever more zealous for the fame of literature than he. He was always courageous, always honest, usually correct; and he always dared to give an opinion.

There is great variety in the poems of "Wild Geese" by Theodore H. Banks, Jr. (Yale), for it contains short lyrics, reflective poems of greater length, and a poetic play. The style is often over-precise, and the quality uneven, but the critical reader must take these as mere signs of immaturity, especially when he comes upon the fine lines of many of the longer poems. Here the poet breaks from his early formalism, and writes with a vividness that is memorable. Four poems of the seasons contain some of the best work in the book, and show descriptive and interpretive power, and a sincerity that promises excellent work to follow. Like many young poets, Mr. Banks writes often of nature and her moods, but he does more than describe; and he shows a deep, though a less experienced interest in all human emotions.

The frankness of childhood is always delightful if one has nothing to fear from it; and when it is safely between the covers of a book, as in Juliet M. Soskice's "Chapters from Childhood" (Harcourt, Brace), one can revel in it. These are clear-cut impressions of people and places, treated with the unconscious humor and the penetrating wisdom of extreme youth. There are very pleasant chapters on school life in England and the contrast to it in a German convent, with such problems as anarchy and religion firmly solved. Like all children the author was sublimely unconscious of her background which happened to be the famous Rossetti circle, but her portrait of her grandfather, the artist Ford Madox Brown, is a rarely beautiful bit of work.

"The Pleasures of Ignorance" by Robert Lynd (Scribner), a series of essays borrowing its title from the first, is a mixture of keen observations, sprightly humor, and an occasional burst into sheer didacticism. Mr. Lynd is at his best in sketches of everyday events and objects. He finds interesting material about Easter eggs, insects, horse racing, and other commonplace things. "It is said that travelling by train is to be made still more uncomfortable. I doubt if there is a man of sufficient genius in the Government to accomplish this," he observes. Again, "Fortunately, the universe is the creation not of a manufacturer but of an artist." Such quips are food for both entertainment and thought.

Friedrich Nietzsche is much quoted, much discussed, little read, and little understood. Friends and foes alike have made a labyrinth of his work by barring all exits with the title, superman. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche was a typical Prussian with a penchant for thundering into Germany's ears that she had no soul and was going to

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the devil. In his relations with the world at large he was a junker, arrogant, inconsiderate, impudent, and dogmatic; in his relations with family and friends he was *ganz bürgerlich*, kindly, fussy, homely and, of course, dogmatic. Oscar Levy has compiled his "Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche" (Doubleday, Page) from the five-volume German edition of Nietzsche's private correspondence with both these attitudes in mind. He seeks to portray not merely the philosopher *en pantoufles* but the intimate life and thoughts of his hero. The reader profits greatly by this method. He is able to follow Nietzsche's ideas from their inception to their final crystallization, and thus by easy stages he arrives at the entire system of philosophy. And it is no small revelation in itself to see this great mind troubled at one and the same time by the probable future of mankind and the reported chilblain of a fellow thinker.

"Flash-lights from the Seven Seas" by Reverend William L. Stidger (Doran) gives graphic and illuminating word pictures of the east,—of scenes and people, of fears and superstitions, of the hopes that can be centred in the Asia of the future.

The unconventionality of "A Virgin Heart" by Remy de Gourmont (N. L. Brown) is its great merit. By avoiding the well worn grooves of fiction and by narrating simply and without description, the author has made his novelette (which is barely more than an incident) real and vivid. It is not the physiological study of a "virgin heart" that he intended but an unaffected story of love in France. The translation is by Aldous Huxley.

Many attempts have been made to explain humor, both on philosophical and physiological grounds. And some progress has been made. Yet humor, *per se*, is just as remote, just as evanescent as ever. Max Eastman's treatise, "The Sense of Humor" (Scribner), is perhaps a trifle less scholarly than that of many philosophers. Just how far the author succeeds in explaining the sense of humor is problematic. Those versed in the lore of Kant, Hegel, Plato, and their ilk, will find Mr. Eastman's disquisition most absorbing. Such persons it will leave with the feeling that they have studied the complicated anatomy of an intricate mental function, and can more fully appreciate it in view of their intimate knowledge of its physiological aspects. As for the rest of us,—well, Mr. Eastman says in his preface, "Although I have tried to make this book enjoyable—my prevailing purpose has been scientific." And who wants to be scientific about humor?

Mr. Chesterton has argued that the difference between the great and the petty, the tremendous and the trifling, lies in the point of view. Thus he brought a microscope to the insignificant things of life and presented them in an inordinate bigness. We doubt not that W. H. Hudson would pronounce this method as untrue to art as it is to life, for this "Traveller in Little Things" (Dutton) is an honest "commercial". He retails his anecdotes; he does not interpret them *à la* Falstaff. He uses no sophistry to make the little seem as important as the great; but he need not argue to convince us that it is no less interesting. The reader, on finishing this book, will be minded of an evening stroll in English meadows.

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FICTION IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The following lists of books in demand in January in the public libraries in the United States have been compiled from reports made by two hundred representative libraries in every section of the country and in cities of all sizes down to ten thousand population. The order of choice is as stated by the librarians.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
3.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
4.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
5.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
6.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
3.	Brass	*Charles G. Norris*	DUTTON
4.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
5.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
6.	The Obstacle Race	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
3.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
4.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
3.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
4.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	Three Soldiers	*John Dos Passos*	DORAN

WESTERN STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
3.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
4.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
5.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
6.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
3.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
4.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
5.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
6.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT

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GENERAL BOOKS IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The titles have been scored by the simple process of giving each a credit of six for each time it appears as first choice, and so down to a score of one for each time it appears in sixth place. The total score for each section and for the whole country determines the order of choice in the table herewith.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
2.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
3.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
4.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
5.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
6.	Margot Asquith: An Autobiography	*Margot Asquith*	DORAN

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
2.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
3.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him	*Joseph P. Tumulty*	DOUBLEDAY

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
3.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	Mystic Isles of the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
6.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him	*Joseph P. Tumulty*	DOUBLEDAY
6.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER

WESTERN STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
4.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
5.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
6.	Working North from Patagonia	*Harry A. Franck*	CENTURY

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Glass of Fashion	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM

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FOREIGN NOTES AND COMMENT

Tributary Notes from Germany

I CAME into possession recently of the first copy of the German translation of Georg Brandes's "Wolfgang Goethe" to reach this country. The fact is worth noting for two reasons: There lies in my study my own translation of this work, a manuscript with which various New York publishers are now familiar either by correspondence or through meeting face to page. Their praise, with one exception, has been as generous as their caution has been pronounced. They have assured me that it is a great work but they have informed me at the same time that the cost of bringing out a work of this size is momentarily prohibitive. Germany, on the other hand, with piles of books about Goethe, some of the largest of them written within the last three years, finds her way clear to publish this study in native dress. And yet some otherwise quite intelligent people wonder why Germany has the reputation of being the land of books.

The second reason for noting the new addition to my library is the fact that Brandes has written a special introduction to the German edition of his "Goethe", telling how he came to write it. The story in brief is as follows: In the winter of 1888-1889, he delivered a series of lectures on Goethe in Copenhagen which he then intended to expand into a book. But the thought occurred to him, we already know too much about Goethe and too little about Shakespeare. He accordingly fell to and wrote his "William Shakespeare". Then came the war. He felt that his scientific work must not be interrupted. But on whom should he write? He found contemporary European leaders consumed either by self-idolization or self-stupefaction or self-annihilation. He thought of Goethe who represented self-development. He took down his old lectures. Not much of them could be used. But by the close of the year 1914 he had his plans mapped out, and as the months rolled by chapter succeeded chapter until he could write the concluding words concerning "the greatest poet of the last three centuries". And Germany, not knowing where the next mark is to come from to pay indemnities and reparations, taxed for everything, as hard put to it financially as any country has ever been, pays Erich Holm and Emilie Stein money to translate this work, though she already has more books on her national hero than any other country has on hers.

Let the Philistines contend that she should first pay her war debts. I feel that she will be able to pay them more easily by virtue of the money invested in this kind of cause. And as a slight postwar tribute to her courage (I too was in the Argonne), I shall devote the rest of these notes to incidents in the German world of books.

A giant among German scholars has died. I refer to Hermann Paul, professor of German at the University of Munich since 1893 and occupant of the same chair at the University of Freiburg i. Br. for twenty years preceding his call to the Bavarian capital. His life explains why we hold a German professor in such high esteem. Where

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is there a man (the war is over) connected with an American university who can point in the evening of his life—Paul was born in 1846—to so much great work well done? He taught all the time, and yet he was able to bring out one monumental work after another, each original, erudite, and suggestive. Dictionaries, grammars, outlines of philology, editions of hitherto unedited manuscripts, contributions to the history of language and literature—it was such works that came from his study with the regularity with which one of our "young intellectuals" publishes slender volumes on New York by night or the United States without beer. No man with a spark of imagination in his soul can contemplate the work of Hermann Paul without becoming enthusiastic over what one human being could accomplish. There is not a single professor of German in this country who does not owe him his debt.

It has become fashionable to refer to three works in Germany as the greatest the country has produced since Goethe wrote his "Faust". I refer to Fritz Mauthner's "History of Atheism", Kayserling's "Travel-Diary of a Philosopher", and Oswald Spengler's "Decadence of the Occident", each of which, American publishers are faintly imagining, might well be brought out in English. Have neither hope nor fear; these books will never appear in English. But are these the three greatest works? Germany is just now wrestling with the novels and novelettes of a writer whose name has never been mentioned in this country, Erwin G. Kolbenheyer. His is a new star in the German firmament. An Austrian by birth, he is a God-seeker. It is an unlovely term, but no other suits his case. He represents that deep religious sentiment which is now making itself manifest in so many ways in humiliated Germany and remnant Austria.

At present, Kolbenheyer is working on a great Paracelsus novel, the first part of which, "The Childhood of Paracelsus", has been published. It treats the problems of spiritual and sensuous knowledge as these are displayed in the youthful hero and heroine, each of whom is exposed to experiences that are inclined to make children now moody and contemplative, now sentimental and temperamental.

His Spinoza novel, entitled "Amor Dei", is finished. It is a rare picture of the Amsterdam ghetto, of Rembrandt who appears as a subsidiary character, as well as of others whose names are fictitious but whose personalities are applicable to anyone who stops to think what life means. Similar to it is the novel told in the first person, the familiar *Ich-Roman*, entitled "Master Joachim Pausewang", having Jacob Boehme, so admired by Coleridge, as one of its speaking characters. And like both of them is "Montsalvatsch", a university or educational novel, in which Kolbenheyer has attempted to depict the spiritual Germany of today in its groping for a way out, its struggle for perfection, its longing for the help that cannot be had from material things. Unfortunately, the novelty of Kolbenheyer's language cannot be reproduced at this point. Fortunately, he himself can be introduced to the American public as a new factor in German-Austrian letters and one from whom great things may be expected.

Munich has recently been the scene of a spirited law suit. The Hyperion-Verlag decided to bring out a new German edition in five volumes of Strindberg's best known novels, and

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employed Else von Hollander to do the translating. Emil Schering of Berlin, who had been the authorized translator of Strindberg in Germany, contended that the translation was an infringement on his rights. The Hyperion-Verlag proceeded on the assumption however that a new edition was needed since the old one could be improved upon. The court dismissed the case on the ground that there was no reason why Germany should not have as many translations of the "Swedish Shakespeare" as she saw fit to pay for. Consequently, she now has two. And yet we in this country cannot afford one translation of Brandes's "Goethe", —Goethe of whom Remy de Gourmont once said: "He is the supreme hero of intellectual humanity."

Alois Brandl, long professor of English at the University of Berlin, resigns the presidency of the Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, but in so doing presents the world with a book entitled "Shakespeare, Leben, Umwelt, Kunst". That is a pretentious caption, but the book deserves it. In it Brandl has a special chapter on Hamlet as a thinker. Let those who feel so inclined smile at the way in which he has turned the question of Hamlet's philosophy over and upside down and inside out. He has at least assembled the facts. If you do not like his conclusions, discard them and draw your own, on the basis of what this German scholar has gathered together. And then go further: lay his book before you and with it as a first aid bring out a school edition of "Hamlet", mentioning Brandl merely in passing. The like has been done before. But inwardly at least express your gratitude to the man.

In 1837, Bulwer-Lytton dedicated his "Ernest Maltravers" to "the German people, a race of poets and thinkers". Were the voluminous lord living today, he might well add, "translators and publishers".

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD

French Notes

THE world is aware that the Goncourt Prize went this year to René Maran and his novel "Batouala". But two other candidates were brought into prominence by the debate which preceded the final decision: both Pierre Mac Orlan with "La Cavalière Elsa", and Jacques Chardonne with "L'Epithalame", received at one moment or another during the discussion five votes out of ten. And their publishers have known how to take advantage of it.

"L'Epithalame", although a novel of married life, is not in the same class with the trash that piles up every year, in France as well as in America, —those adventures and misadventures of the standardized "modern couple". M. Chardonne's book deals with intelligent, ardent, honest, normal characters; it pretends to no generalization except that which naturally results from a keen individual study. "L'Epithalame", resonant and satisfying title, gives a truthful rendering of French sentimental perspectives.

Mac Orlan has already been brought to the attention of readers of these notes. "La Cavalière Elsa" is a story inspired by the Russian Revolution, but a revolution transposed to the near future, with the onrush of the Asiatic armies against the nations of western Europe. Elsa, a strange and electric Jewish girl, is leading them. There is an atmosphere of nightmarish wickedness, and that bold, irrepressible humor, Mac Orlan's continual gift.

Also in connection with Soviet Rus-

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sia, a new book by Claude Anet, the author of "Ariane, Jeune Fille Russe". In "Quand la Terre Trembla", fiction and history are blended; Lenin crosses the stage, and a love story develops, with more happiness than tragedy.

Among several scientific novels—that is, stories where actual modern inventions or some new bold hypothesis supplies the original features of the plot—"La Jeune Fille en Proie au Monstre", by Pierre de la Batut, must be set apart. An archæologist discovers that a race of highly developed animals, once the masters of this earth, has not entirely disappeared, and is preparing for new conquests in a subterranean domain. Human beings penetrate into that queer kingdom, and their adventures are reminiscent of the best pages of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells—when the latter applied his matter-of-fact manner to fancy subjects, instead of, as now, applying his fancy to matters of fact....

There is also an abundant literature on what America improperly calls "spiritualism". "Les Morts Vivent-ils", by Paul Heuzé, is a good inquiry into the problems of spiritism, with answers by Flammarion, Conan Doyle, Professor Richet, Maeterlinck, Mme. Curie, Professor Branly, etc. At least, it proves that scientists are far from agreeing on the subject.

Paul Gsell, to whom we were indebted for the excellent book on Rodin, called "Art", is now responsible for having collected Anatole France's "Propos"; a collection which helps the reader to enter into closer familiarity with the author of "Thaïs", but brings no revelation to anyone who is acquainted with the "Bergeret" series. There is no mystery about Anatole France, as there was about Rodin, as there is still about Cézanne or Debussy. A writer with a high critical intelligence, who has explained himself to us through many books of elaborate self-analysis, has not much to gain through such a supplement of anecdotal information.

Of more significance, because the author speaks here with the best of himself, are the "Morceaux Choisis" of André Gide, just published by the Nouvelle Revue Française. There is no doubt that Gide has carefully selected and arranged the fragments which compose the volume. And now we are prepared to answer this embarrassing question so often put to us: Which book of Gide's should be suggested to a new reader who wants to become acquainted with this most influential of French writers? We used to hesitate between "Les Nourritures Terrestres", "La Porte Etroite", "Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue", "Prétextes"—according to what we knew of the reader's disposition, state of culture, and mental or sentimental capacity. Hereafter we shall have a consolidated answer. The "Morceaux Choisis" leaves everyone free to choose, at his own time, among the many artists who have expressed themselves in the works of that single man.

Theatrical news is expected to lose its freshness when it is carried across the ocean. Still Tristan Bernard's own appearance in his character of Monsieur Codomat will remain as a date in the history of the Paris theatre. "Monsieur Codomat" is the masterpiece of this most successful of French playwrights. It has all his qualities, in their subtlest degree; other comedies were more hastily written or less carefully composed; it was, of course, almost a failure when it was first produced some years ago. Tristan Bernard has now his revenge, as both the play and the acting are considered as the height of his genius.

PIERRE DE LANUX

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THE GOSSIP SHOP

TWO things, besides the huge crowd of expensively dressed non-poets gathered in the Hotel Astor ballroom, made the annual dinner of the Poetry Society of America memorable. These two came toward dawn (though most of this large audience waited. Is it not strange that each year the number of persons who are tolerantly curious concerning the arts increases?). When Amy Lowell arose it was near or after the witching hour, and she said precisely what she had been thinking about many things, among them the Poetry Society. It needed to be said. Then Carl Sandburg got up slowly. He had been sitting for an hour past, his pale heavy noble head, with its lock of grey hair over the forehead, leaned back against the wall, eyes closed. Now, however, he was alive. He read his long poem of the spirit of Chicago, "The Windy City", read it with an understanding of the subtle shades of rhythm that only Carl himself knows, read it so that the jaded audience and the rapidly fading poets were moved to cheers. It was the first time we had ever heard Carl sing. His rendition of "Jay Gould's Daughter", a ditty of the railroad bum, was more dramatic than most operatic arias. Why doesn't Carl move from Chicago to New York so that a fellow can see him occasionally? Edwin Arlington Robinson was there, too. He sat silently and patiently until morning. Several days before we had called on him in Brooklyn, where he is working on a long poem, an extremely long poem. We discussed "The London Mercury" and the poetry of John V. A. Weaver. Sandburg and Robinson are two of our four poetic heroes. Which reminds us, that when we visited Ben Miller, that charming appreciator of poetry, not long ago in Washington, we were at first astonished to hear the excellent southern cook (who made us several varieties of biscuits for a breakfast that should have been served to the muses on Olympus) call "Rob't Frost, O Rob't Frost!" This was unusual. This was amazing. Where was Robert Frost?

Carl Sandburg

A grey cat bounded into the kitchen. "Thea yo ah!" said the triumphant maidservant. "Now I'm goin' tuh find Mistah John Keats." So Mr. Miller combines his pets and his hobby. We

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have just bought two love birds (green and yellow). We are thinking of calling them—oh well! never mind.

The following comes from a prominent novelist (female). We publish it quite without comment.

BALLAD OF BOOK-LICKING

Oh, if you have written a book
And you know that it won't be read,
And that no one will give it a kindly look
And before it's alive it will be stone-dead;
If it's dull and dreary and commonplace
And has no style to give it grace;
Nevertheless—take heart—
Book-licking is the latest art!

The very first of your needs consists
In making friends of the colyumists;
There's Benchley and Morley, Heywood and Don,
And F. P. A. to help it on.
They're all good fellows, what can they do
When you beg them just "for a word or two"?
They'll shrug their shoulders and hide a grin,
But be persistent, they might give in,
And you should care what they really think
If they'll grant you a line of book-licker's ink.

Oh if a book you have written,
And your publisher looks blue,
And his feet with cold are smitten,
And he says, "It will never do!"
Simply smile and say, "I know,—
But there's one sure trick to make it go:
Wallie Irwin and Charlie Towne,
And Fannie Hurst with much renown,
Then Mrs. Atherton, Julian Street,
And Arthur Vance will make it complete.
If I ask them they'll *have* to say
Something pleasant. That's the way!
Then, damn their eyes,
We'll use their blurbs to advertise!
They're all my friends. They're very kind.
What they honestly think of me, I don't mind."

Oh, if you have written a book,
Don't worry about the critics,
Hand them a narsty look,
Call 'em mental paralytics.
Hang on to the Known and the Great,
Demand that your merits they state.
Every one has a generous heart—
And—Book-licking is the latest art.
(Author's name withheld. Safety First!)

In an office of the Munson Line, Dock 10, New York City, has been established the headquarters of the Merchant Marine Library Association of the Port of New York. Its function is to place books on ships of the merchant marine. Believe me, they need them. Milton Raison, the ex-sailor poet, is in charge of this office, under Miss Barclay of the A. L. A. They want books. Can't you send them some? They could be sent direct to the dock or to the Extension Division of the New York Public Library, or, if you will write young Mr. Raison a letter, he'll probably be able to call for them. If you could have seen the face of an old captain he took us to see the other day, when he was told that he could have some books, you'd go scrambling into the library to dig up every last book you didn't need.

To the Theatre Guild, we owe an apology. It was not, however, until we saw the first act of "He Who Gets Slapped" from back stage with young Mr. Velie (formerly of Yale) who designs stage sets ("Ambush" and "The Cloister" among them), that we fully realized the extent of our error. Theresa Helburn is not and never was, a member of the cast of that exquisitely produced drama. There is a young lady who looks much like her. We bow humbly, and plead for our near-sighted eyes. The most brilliant first night we have ever attended was Morris Gest's invitation performance of the "Chauve Souris", the Bat Theatre of Moscow. Few audiences rose so to cheers as did this one to Nikita Balieff's broken English announcements of acts which are produced with such perfection and delicacy as is seldom seen in New York City. However, as usual, we transgress. Ours is the function of Town Topics. We must scrutinize the audience not the play, though we cannot fail to tell you that for comic delight few things equal "The Parade of the Wooden Sol-

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diers", and as for "Katinka" in her music box, the gipsy singers, and the superb dancing of Mr. Kotchetovsky —ah well, it's all good. It's so good that the audience actually fought with M. Balieff for encores; and at one time he was speaking in French, Russian, and English, mixed. Chaliapin, tall, grey, reposeful, towered in the front ranks. There were cheers for him as he entered. Cheers as he shook hands with Balieff. We stood through his Boris not long ago, and we have nothing to say. This is the perfection of miming. Jeritza, too, was there, and Emily Stevens, and everyone else in the world. The first night of Paul Géraldy's "The Nest" was exciting to us because it brought the artist Leo Mielziner's son Kenneth MacKenna back to town in a part that is admirably suited to his youth and finished technique. This is the mother play for which many of us have been waiting. The second act is superb and Lucile Watson has a play worthy of her at last.

Earl Fisk of Green Bay, Wisconsin, is always sending us delightful book notes. Here's his latest:

I received the other day from David G. Joyce, the Chicago book collector, a book that will excite all lovers and collectors of Robert Louis Stevenson. As all true Stevensonians know, the glimpses of R. L. S. as a satirist are few and far between. It will be remembered that Stevenson planned a flippant piece called "Diogenes in London" which upon the advice of Sir Sidney Colvin was never finished. In 1920 the first fragment of this contemplated work appeared in London with an introduction by E. J. Hopkins. Now this second fragment from the manuscript in the possession of Mr. Joyce is printed. The capable introduction is written by Vincent Starrett. Both fragments are written in an hilarious Gilbert and Sullivan tempo, more familiar in the letters of R. L. S. than in his other work; and they suggest the thorough and disrespectful enjoyment which the young man intended to have out of his assault on his Victorian contemporaries, clerical and political as well as literary.

The bit which appeared in London was the "Police Scene" in which Diogenes, pursuing his ancient search, is robbed of his lantern, meets Matthew Arnold and Miss Braddon, and is astonished to hear that the police are supposed to recover the stolen property. In the present fragment Diogenes is introduced at the Savile Club by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is met by Besant, and six distinguished guests add lustre to the occasion: "Blackmore had come with a basket of fruit and obsolete expressions; Hardy had looked in to lay down the normal of the Vulgar Woman; Oscar Wilde to buy a statuette from Pater; Black to recruit for his new Midnight Society of the Seven Converted Milkmen; Gilbert and Sullivan to submit a song with toothcomb accompaniment, to the principal critics assembled....There was something fiery, wild and daring in the scene. Naked genius here strangled serpents in its cradle. What it might do next, the heart quailed to fancy." Diogenes is installed in a chair on the table, while one after another of the company presents himself unabashed before the cynic, and in a few heartfelt strains proffers his claims to be a MAN. Here unfortunately the fragment ends, and we do not know what these claims might have been. There is only enough to stimulate our interest and we must speculate as to what the finish could have been. It is to be regretted that Diogenes was not allowed to complete his stopover in London.

In recent years, several important manuscripts of R. L. S. have been given tardy publication, either by the regular publishers of Stevenson's work or the fortunate possessors of the scripts, and Vincent Starrett asserts, with some reason, that few, if any, more may be expected. No doubt there will be others, as the years reveal their hiding places, but the known possibilities are dwindling. Lovers and collectors of R. L. S. (and if the lover is not always the collector, be assured the collector is always the lover) will soon have to reconcile themselves to the fact that there must come an end even to Stevenson discoveries.

This hitherto unpublished manuscript from the collection of Mr. Joyce is issued by Frank M. Morris, the dean of Chicago booksellers. One hundred and fifty copies have been printed on handmade paper and five on vellum by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn. It is a very pretty piece of bookwork. The volume is not for sale but has been privately done for Mr. Joyce in the love of Stevenson and for the delectation of a limited few. All Stevensonians will undoubtedly fall all over themselves in an effort to obtain a copy.

Recently, at tea, we met Emily Clark of "The Reviewer" and Mrs. James Branch Cabell. Miss Clark told us of the foundation of that enterprising Richmond literary journal. It all hap-

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pened one Sunday afternoon when a group decided that it would like to have a paper. "You see we have no idea of raising the literary morals of the south," she told us. "When it stops being fun to edit 'The Reviewer', why! 'The Reviewer' stops." That's fair enough. You will find her January number filled with good things, and including such names as John Galsworthy, Joseph Hergesheimer, Edwin Bjorkman, Burton Rascoe, and Edward Hale Bierstadt. We confessed to Miss Clark that we did not always understand her contributors. To which she replied that they were extremely simple and not at all clever. Alas! When James Branch Cabell writes in his most involved manner, and Vincent Starrett accuses Ben Ray

Redman (a gentle soul from Bronxville whom we have ourselves seen in the flesh) of being James Branch Cabell, we cannot but feel that this flaring torch of Virginia culture is a trifle complex. However, "The Reviewer" is an extremely interesting magazine.

Speaking of the south, in reading "General Robert E. Lee After Appomattox" we discovered the following table, showing the books that the confederate general took from the library of Washington University during his term there as president.

Goldsmith's Rome
Madame D'Abrantes
Sparks' Washington
Bleak House
Leo the Tenth, Vols. 3 and 4
Hood's Works
Marshall's Washington, Vol. 3
Marshall's Washington, Vols. 4 and 5
Sparks' Washington, Vol. 10
American Constitutions
Walburn's Biographical Dictionary
Gazetteer of the United States
Ramsey's American Revolution, Vols. 1 and 2
Henning's Statutes
Calculus
Webster's Dictionary, unabridged
Marshall's Life of Washington, Vols. 3, 4 and 5
Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield
Pilgrim's Progress
Favorite Poets of England. Ill. 2 Vols.
Favorite Poets of England. Ill. 2 Vols.
Robinson Crusoe
Life of Goethe, 2 Vols.
Dr. Kane's Arctic Expedition. Vol. 1
Shakespeare, III
New Eclectic, Aug., Sept., Oct., 1868
Blackwood's for September
Blackwood's for Feb., Apr., May, July, Aug., Sept., and Oct.
Blackwood's for December
Blackwood's for Jan.
Macaulay's Eng., Vol. 5
Queens of the Country
Louis XIV., Vols. 1 and 2
Louis Napoleon and His Times
Louis the Seventeenth
Women of the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 2
Blackwood's for July, 1864
Blackwood's for January, 1860

We met Floyd Dell the other day, looking as boyish as ever, having just returned from an afternoon call on his very new young son, "Moon-Calf II". We asked him to write us gossip concerning himself and he sent us much concerning everyone else in the world. Says he:

"Sherwood Anderson is known

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among his friends as one of the best raconteurs in the United States. He tells a story in his rich drawl with an inimitable gusto. But when it comes to making a public speech, he is about as shy and awkward and embarrassed as most authors. At the beginning of his literary career, when he found that this career involved the painful duty of standing up and making 'a few remarks' to curious strangers every now and then, he memorized a set form of words as an opening: 'I am not really an author—I am a business man.' Just after the 'Dial' prize was awarded to him for his distinguished services to American fiction, he was given a dinner at the New York Civic Club, and was called upon for a few remarks. He hitched himself out of his chair, and began with his customary 'opening'. One of the editors of 'The Dial', who was present, was observed to frown and bite his lip. Turning to his neighbor, he said in an agonized whisper: 'We didn't award the "Dial" prize to a *business man!*'

"Arthur Davison Ficke, whose blank verse play, 'Mr. Faust', was given at the Provincetown Players' theatre in February, is a collector of Japanese prints as well as a poet. His collection, amassed during twenty years, was sold at public auction at the American Art Galleries a year or two ago, and brought fabulous sums, which it is understood Mr. Ficke has used—as any lover of Japanese prints would take for granted—in buying more Japanese prints. He is the author of a handbook on the subject entitled 'Chats on Japanese Prints'. Mr. Ficke has just accepted an appointment as a member of the fine arts department at Harvard, and will take up his duties next fall. He will be lecturer on Japanese art and curator of the department of Japanese prints in the Museum of Fine Arts. These duties not being onerous, he is expected to spend most of his time writing poetry and plays. Mr. Ficke, by the way, who recently spent a year in China, has brought back with him a collection of Chinese jade dragons which have exercised an

unholy fascination upon all who have seen them, and perhaps his next book will be about jade dragons.

"Robert Frost has received an appointment to an 'Idle Fellowship' at the University of Michigan. The 'Idle Fellowship' idea is a new and notable one. Its incumbent does the university the honor of residing in the same town, but has literally no duties; if he should write a masterpiece or two while thus connected with the university, so much the better, but this is not required of him. In a time when poets are notoriously less amply rewarded by the public than are politicians and film comedians, this is not only a graceful but a useful way of showing appreciation. The idea is being considered by more than one university, and it is understood that several of our American poets have been approached by various middle western universities with tentative offers of the same kind. The only difficulty seems to be that when it comes to idling, most of them would prefer to do it at home.

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"Edna St. Vincent Millay, who is at present engaged in seeing the world while there is any of it left to see, was last heard of in Albania, which she reached via Paris and Rome. Not content with her laurels as poet and playwright, she has adventured into the realm of prose, and is, in the intervals between pleasant conversations with Albanian bandits, finishing 'a sort of novel'—the description is hers—which will be brought out before long."

We succeeded in extracting Mr. Dell's bookplate, designed by Lydia Gibson, with a briary-bush, typewriter motif rampant. It forms an interesting contrast to that of Mr. George Washington, which we are reprinting from that excellent book, "Bookplates for Beginners".

Ida Josephine Watson, manager of Duluth's Glass Block Store Book Shop, writes to tell the Gossip Shop of a luncheon arranged by her for Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

We included in the party magnates in different fields—one an officer of the Steel Company, another a mining engineer of no mean experience in the far north, another a newspaper man, and still another a Yale graduate; these, with some charming women to fill up the chinks in conversation, made the party.

Among them Mr. Stefansson was easily and completely most captivating. As you say, he is so little like one's conception of an explorer that one wonders how so slight, so young, and so modest a man could have accomplished so much, for he has not only removed the immense barrier to the "frozen north" but his thirteen years' experiences have thrown a monkey wrench into the theory that man cannot live on meat alone, have proved false the time-honored stories in text books on this part of the country, and have probably added untold wealth to Canada and America by demonstrating beyond the shadow of a doubt that this part of the world is habitable, comfortable, and accessible.

After luncheon our party adjourned to the Book Shop, where Mr. Stefansson autographed many copies of his book "My Life With the Eskimo", of which a hundred dollars' worth was sold in less than half an hour.

Mr. Stefansson's visit to Duluth was distinctly an event, and one which our city will be the richer for having experienced.

According to T. Philip Terry, author of the Mexican Baedeker, the first book printed in the New World was a guidebook—Fray Juan de Estrada's "Spiritual Ladder for Reaching Heaven". It was printed in Mexico City in 1536, more than a century before the first press was established at Cambridge; a quarter of a century before Shakespeare was born, and eight decades before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. From this ancient Spanish printing press erected by the conquistadores in the old Aztec metropolis, came the first wood engraving in the New World, the title page to Juan Gerson's "Tripartito", in 1544; the first sheet music, in 1561; and the first newspaper, "El Mercurio Volante"—the Flying Mercury—, in 1693. This paper was established by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, one of the most noted Mexicans of colonial times—poet, philosopher, historian, antiquarian, essayist, journalist, and critic.

Our choice of poems in the December magazines was: "Natives of Rock" by Glenway Wescott (Dial); "Ring-Doves" by Joseph Auslander (American Poetry Magazine); "Not by the Sea" by Sara Teasdale (Harper's); "The Beggar God" by Maxwell Anderson (Measure); "Moods of Women" by Genevieve Taggard (Lyric West); "Nebuchadnezzar" by Elinor Wylie (New Republic); "Medusa" by Louise Bogan (New Republic).

Gene Markey has consented to do a series of interviews with Chicago men of letters for us. His facile pen and his ready wit will doubtless make

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these vignettes a definite contribution to the files of American biographical material.

I: PERKINS THE POET

With a pleasant sense of expectancy I mounted the steps of Orley Philpott Perkins's cottage, and punched the bell. In a twinkling the door was flung open, and the bard of Asbury Park, himself, was bowing me in. Interested readers have often questioned me as to Orley Philpott Perkins's age. It is, I should surmise, somewhere between twenty-five and fifty, and though he is quite bald, there is a merry twinkle in his eye.*

"Come in," he invited genially, and as we passed through the hallway a cuckoo clock cuckooed sweetly.

"A good omen," smiled the poet, and preceded me into a sunny parlor, bright with chintz-covered furniture, chintz curtains, and a pink geranium blooming in each window.

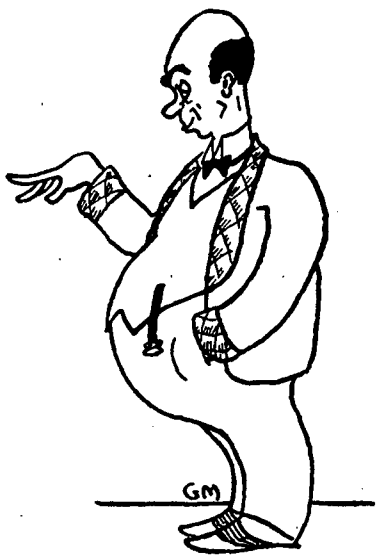
"I always sit in the Poet's Corner," he announced, establishing himself in the comfortable chair. All the pictures in that corner were, I observed, of himself. I sat down on the piano stool, and the interview began.

"What shall we talk about?" he queried pleasantly. "Me, I suppose. Well, first of all, you might mention somewhere in your article that Cervantes and Bunyan are bringing out my new volume of verse in April."

I made a rapid entry in my notebook.

"It's called", went on Mr. Perkins, "'April Showers and May Flowers'—a rather charming title, I think." He paused, and a note of deeper seriousness crept into his voice. "There is a frontispiece photograph of myself, but of course you needn't mention *that*. Let's see, where were we—oh, yes. The first poem in the book...."

He talked on and on, and at regular intervals came the caroling of the



Orley Philpott Perkins

cuckoo, until at length it cuckooed three o'clock.

"Three times and out," I murmured, reaching under the piano stool for my hat.

"Oh, must you go?" The poet rose as I stood up. "I wanted to tell you about the *last* poem in the book. It's called 'L'Envoi'—rather an unusual title, if I *do* say it."

He was following me to the door.

"Note the simplicity of it: clear-cut as a Chinese fragment, yet so essentially American. It goes like this:

The moon—
God's last nickel
Flung upon the counter
Of the sky.

"Now, isn't that—oh, *good*by! So glad you came and..."

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Upon being shown a copy of this interview Mr. Perkins objected to the use of the singular "eye". He maintains that there is nothing the matter with the other one, save a slight cataract, and our interviewer should have written the word "eyes".

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George Palmer Putnam has returned from Europe, and has immediately vanished to a hospital. Before going, however, he presented us with this entertaining sketch of Michael Sadleir, author of "Privilege", by Bohun

Michael Sadleir

Lynch, the famous English cartoonist. Mr. Putnam tells us, too, that he has many good books in his luggage. Among them is "Painted Windows", the new book of revelation by the author of "The Mirrors of Downing Street". This is to be a discussion of the clergy, we understand, and Mr. Putnam believes it to be sensational. Incidentally, Mr. Doran has also just returned from England this morning; but so far, all we have caught of him was a glimpse and a smile as he vanished into his office, where his day will be as full as the one on which he left. That his luggage contains good books goes without saying, doesn't it?

Agnes Ware Bishop sends us news of Wallace M. Sloane, winner of the prize offered by the Birmingham Writers' Club for the best poem on Birmingham. Mr. Sloane's verses were read at the city's recent Semi-Centennial.

Wallace M. Sloane is a young man born and bred in Fort Payne and of Alabama parentage. He has taught school, abstracted land titles, reported on a big newspaper, and ('tis said by those who know) written poetry from infancy. At present he is making the race for Judge of Probate of his county and I think he'll get it —that is, if he can conceal the fact that he has written a poem. But since the poem is about Birmingham, maybe his constituents will think it only big business. Let us hope so, for we do need poetry in politics.

While poetry is his first and last love, Mr. Sloane has written some very good fiction. His last was a series of seven short stories portraying the rise and fall of a Boom Town in the south. These appeared in "The Argosy" and the last of the series was published three or four months ago.

Some of his poetry has been widely copied: "War", "Elegy of an Old-Time Country Pedagogue", "Loneliness", "One That Remembers" —it is to be hoped that these and others may be gathered into one volume as a valuable contribution to Alabama literature.

His Birmingham is—

An urban giantess upon the hills,
Made crimson bright, as when Aurora breathes
Her dream of day into the Northern lights.

Her industries give her strength and buoyancy—

Her strength is as the strength of her own hills;
Her vigor as the vigor of the sea;
Her buoyancy the buoyancy of youth:
. . . . . .
Everything she knows
But faltering and weakness. Yet she stands
A thing of old-world beauty; and her breath,
Sooty, grime-laden, thick, resolves itself
To verdant parks and drive-ways; and her sweat,
When she travails, congeals itself into
Sweet homes and shops and pleasure palaces,
Gigantic, towering structures and white ways,
Paving the pathway for a million souls.

Once in the dear dead days beyond recall Buster Brown's "Tige" was in high favor with us. Now, alas! for poor "Tige", we are enamored of George Herriman's offspring—that

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very, very "Krazy Kat" of the comic supplement who has danced his foolish way into our affections. For John Alden Carpenter has composed a ballet in which Krazy Kat, to say nothing of Ignatz Mouse, appears "in person" (or however they say it in the movies). At the Town Hall, then, one memorable afternoon recently, we beheld this "jazz pantomime". We were entranced by the whimsical black and white scenery; by the jolly burlesquing of the Spanish fandango and the Al Jolson type of gamboling; by the impish gyrations of tiny white Ignatz; and by Krazy Kat's—well, his *mug*, if you know what we mean, and his inimitable way of sleeping, legs crossed, hands clasped behind his head. There were gorgeous snores from the orchestra and the saxophone laughed as only a saxophone can.

There was a highfalutin paragraph in the program representing Krazy Kat as "Don Quixote and Parsifal rolled into one". We asked Mr. Herriman about this, but he was completely dazed by the audience and expressed a desire to take his child back to the offices of the "Journal", away from the influence of these highbrows. Krazy Kat was, he explained, the result of an office boy's attaching to Mr. Herriman's drawings the picture of a cat. Like clowns, cartoonists must be serious critters; at any rate so we found Krazy Kat's parent and so we have found the creator of "Petey", Charlie Voight, whose hobby is the French Revolution and who thinks Donald Ogden Stewart's "Parody Outline of History" the funniest book in existence.

In front of us, at "Krazy Kat", sat Anne Neacy of the Russian Arts and Crafts Studio, executrix (wouldn't you say?) of the costumes. Artist-ladies, we have found, are usually as lovely as their work. Which reminds us that not long ago we saw Clare Sheridan, attired in gold and purple, the effect completed by a coiffure of gold curls. At the time she was eating sandwiches with relish and applauding energetically at mention of Henry James.

Herbert S. Gorman

The Poetry Benefit at the MacDowell Club, for the MacDowell Colony at Peterboro, New Hampshire, was interesting if only because of Maxwell Bodenheim's biting satirical verses and the fact that we heard some of Herbert Gorman's poems again. Miss Lowell, too, was there. Elinor Wylie in a white gown, Padraic Colum, and John Butler Yeats, a little puzzled by the lights, gentle, sweet-voiced. He read a quiet poem on beauty and death. This morning the paper announces that the measure of that gentle life is full. Yeats's shrine here in New York has been one to which many visitors have flocked. There the old poet and artist, father of a greater poet, sat and spun yarns. He will be sadly missed. Margaret Severn danced to poems by John V. A. Weaver and the editor of this magazine. Other poets present were, Laura and William Rose Benét, Leonora Speyer, and Babette Deutsch. The sketch which adorns this column, by Clayton Knight, was made, Mr. Gorman tells us, directly after the receipt of a rejection slip from us.

The very mention of the word California is soothing to us these blustery days, and we hasten to share with you the gossip which Laura Bell Everett sends us from that delightful state:

One of the notable events of the Dante cen-

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tenary is the appearance of the new translation of the "Divina Commedia" by Melville Best Anderson, professor emeritus of English literature at Stanford University. Dr. Anderson has spent the last twenty years—a part of the time in Italy, the greater part at his own home at Menlo Park—upon this monumental work. He has rendered the "Divine Comedy" in the metre of the original, the Italian *terza rima*, a beautiful verse form fixed immortally in English by Shelley in his "Ode to the West Wind". He assists the reader by marginal notes, notes that Edward Howard Griggs call "delightfully unconventional".

Dr. Anderson was the head of the English Department of Stanford University from its opening in 1891 until 1910, when he retired to devote his time to his translation. His home, a mile from the cloistered pale of the university, came to be a student centre, where Mrs. Anderson graciously made everyone welcome. A list of New York writers usually includes from one to three of Dr. Anderson's former students.

Both his sons became scientists. Malcolm Anderson, naturalist, who died in yeoman service during the war, wandered into literature in some charming Chinese tales, published after his death. The younger son is Dr. Robert Anderson, the geologist.

The publication of Dr. Anderson's "Divina Commedia" and David Starr Jordan's biography, "The Days of a Man", within a few months of each other, recalls the long friendship between the two men. A year ago Dr. Anderson, after the manner of Horace, celebrated the birthday of Dr. Jordan with an epistle which he presented as a booklet, "Commemorating a Friendship of Half a Century".

With the establishment of "The Pacific Review" the northwest has now its first periodical publication of general interest. Problems of the Pacific are given important position; but the broader questions that have no geographical boundaries find discussion in the new quarterly—now in its sixth number. Modeled much after "The Yale Review" and "The South Atlantic Quarterly", "The Pacific Review" during the past year, in addition to material of general literary, economic, historical, and social interest, has published three symposia,—one on "The Oriental on the Pacific Coast" (including such writers as David Starr Jordan), a second on "The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson" (with contributors like George Creel and William E. Dodd), and a third on "The Melting Pot—a Nation in the Making" (with writers such as W. E. Burghardt Du Bois on the list). Poetry and book reviews add a distinctly literary flavor to the magazine. The "Review" is published at the University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington, under the editorship of Glenn Hughes, a well-known litterateur of the Coast.

The death of James B. Pinker of London on February 8, in New York, will come as a great shock to a host of American friends including writers, editors, and publishers. For many years his name has been a household word in the publishing world, and through his literary and dramatic agency have been handled the novels and plays of the best known English writers. Galsworthy, Conrad, Bennett, Henry James, Walpole, Compton Mackenzie, C. N. and A. M. Williamson, Swinnerton, and a long list of others have held him in high regard as a friend and business representative. Mr. Pinker contracted influenza on shipboard and died five days after his arrival in New York.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER

THE BOOKMAN offers each month prizes for the best contributions from boys or girls fifteen years or under. The essays should be three hundred words in length, written in ink on one side of the paper only, and containing the writer's name, address, and age in the upper right hand corner. They should be addressed "Children's Book Corner", in care of THE BOOKMAN.

Subjects for March are: "Do I Like Fairy Stories, and Why", or a review of some recent children's book. The first prize will be Montrose J. Moses's "A Treasury of Plays for Children"; the second, Padraic Colum's "The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles". The announcement of the prize-winners will appear in May.

February awards will be announced in the April BOOKMAN.

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